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THE HOODOO

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Walter H. Baker & Company

No. 5 Hamilton Place, Boston, Massachusetts

The Hoodoo

A Farce in Three Acts

By

WALTER BEN HARE

*Author of "Teddy," "The Boy Scouts,"
"A College Town," etc.*

NOTE

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BOSTON
WALTER H. BAKER & CO.

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The Hoodoo PS 3515
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CHARACTERS

BRIGHTON EARLY, *about to be married.*
BILLY JACKSON, *the heart breaker.*
PROFESSOR SOLOMON SPIGGOT, *an authority on Egypt.*
HEMACHUS SPIGGOT, *his son, aged seventeen.*
MR. MALACHI MEEK, *a lively old gentleman of sixty-nine.*
MR. DUN, *the burglar.*
MISS AMY LEE, *about to be married.*
MRS. PERRINGTON-SHINE, *her aunt and Mr. Meek's daughter.*
GWENDOLYN PERRINGTON-SHINE, *who does just as mamma says.*
DODO DE GRAFT, *the Dazzling Daisy.*
MRS. IMA CLINGER, *a fascinating young widow.*
ANGELINA, *her angel child, aged eight.*
MISS DORIS RUFFLES, *Amy's maid of honor.*
MRS. SEMIRAMIS SPIGGOT, *the mother of seven.*
EUPEPSIA SPIGGOT, *her daughter, aged sixteen.*
MISS LONGNECKER, *a public school-teacher.*
LULU, *by name and nature.*
AUNT PARADISE, *the colored cook lady.*
FOUR LITTLE SPIGGOTS.

TIME.—1912, in late September.

PLACE.—Mrs. Perrington-Shine's country home about thirty minutes from Philadelphia.

OCCASION.—A house party at the Lee-Early wedding.

TIME OF PERFORMANCE.—Two hours and twenty minutes.

SYNOPSIS

ACT I. The lawn at Mrs. Perrington-Shine's country home. An Egyptian wedding present. Trouble for the groom.

ACT II. The library at 8:00 P. M. A thief in the house. Trouble for Billy Jackson, the susceptible.

ACT III. The same library at 11:00 P. M. Trouble for the burglar. Eloped at midnight.

NOTE.—With a very little and easy alteration this play may be produced with only one interior scene.



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COSTUMES AND CHARACTERISTICS

BRIGHTON.—A clever, good-looking young man aged about twenty-five. Always faultlessly dressed. May wear small mustache. To be played in a loud and snappy manner. On his first entrance he wears tan boots or puttees, neat riding suit, stock collar and tie and dark derby hat. Carries a crop. On his entrance to meet Miss Longnecker he wears a gray or brown walking suit with hat to match. He wears this costume in the second act, but on his first entrance it is concealed by an automobile coat, cap, gauntlets and goggles. On his entrance after Dodo's scene with Miss Longnecker, he wears conventional full evening dress with white gloves for dancing. In Act III he wears full dress trousers with a dark smoking jacket.

BILLY JACKSON.—A handsome young fellow of about twenty-two. Bright, cheerful and a trifle over-confident. The lines must be perfectly memorized and delivered in a rather quick, spontaneous manner with frequent smiles and laughter. Remember Billy is young and very careless. Always well groomed and appears in ultra fashionable clothes of a somewhat exaggerated, collegey cut. For first entrance wear a neat riding suit with puttees, pink stock, and large Scotch cap. Carries crop and wears jasmine or gardenia in buttonhole of coat. In Act II he wears full evening dress with a bunch of violets on coat. White gloves. In Act III plain business suit, and on last entrance a light top coat, derby hat and neat suit-case.

PROFESSOR SPIGGOT.—A character part. Make up pale with rather long black hair, black bushy eyebrows and a suspicion of blue indicating close shave but heavy beard. He speaks rather slowly and always with precision. Has a characteristic of holding both hands pointed together in front of him and appears rather absent-minded at times. Frequently raises his eyebrows and looks woebegone. In spite of these humorous mannerisms, he must maintain a distinct air of dignity and calmness. He makes no change in his costume during the play. Wears a rather seedy black Prince Albert coat and black increased trousers, rather short and showing white socks and low wide-toed shoes. High cut black vest, pointed collar and old-fashioned flat four-in-hand ready-made cravat. On his first

entrance he wears a tall silk hat (rather old-fashioned) and carries a very large black umbrella and an old-fashioned black suit-case. White cotton gloves for first scene and nose-glasses all through the play.

HEMACHUS.—Must be played by a very tall man and thin, if possible. His costume is similar to his father's, except that he wears a wide-rimmed black hat. His speech is always in a monotone and he has a peculiar halt in his conversation which is full of unnatural pauses like a child reciting his first piece. If these suggestions are followed the actor cannot fail to make a hit in this part. Remember that his main characteristic is timidity and a childlike dependence upon his father.

MALACHI MEEK.—Aged sixty-nine and must look the part. White wig, chin whiskers and eyebrows. In Act I he wears a neat suit suitable for an old gentleman. In Act II neat Prince Albert, etc. Act III dressing-gown. Never forget the halting walk, the stoop, and the dim sight of the aged man. Bright colored bandanna handkerchief for Act I.

DUN.—A rather stout man of about thirty-seven. Quick movements and a cat-like, quick walk characterize the burglar. Make up with plenty of brown and red color. Heavy beard indicated. Shaggy black eyebrows. Hair disarranged. Woolen shirt, rough cap and corduroy suit somewhat worn. Large sack of valuables always in evidence. Electric flash light and "jimmy." Always quiet and quick, and when speaking use a rough, hoarse, throaty voice.

AMY.—Aged about nineteen. On first entrance she wears a riding habit, derby hat with veil, gauntlets and carries a crop. On second entrance she wears a pretty, soft, lingerie dress of some delicate color and large garden hat. During Act II she wears a rather elaborate dinner gown of pale blue and silver, cut en train. Pale blue head-dress. In Act III a long, trailing lacy room-robe.

MRS. PERRINGTON-SHINE.—Aged forty-three. White wig or well powdered hair. Very stiff, dignified and stately. Moves slowly and speaks rather loudly. Always accustomed to being obeyed. In Act I she wears an afternoon toilet of lavender with lorgnette fastened to chain of black beads. Use the lorgnette frequently. During Act II she wears a very elaborate dinner gown of black, heavily spangled. Long train. Black ornaments in hair. Lorgnette and black feather fan. A huge bunch of artificial crimson geraniums may be worn on corsage.

GWENDOLYN.—Girlish and rather shy. Very fond of refer-

ring to *mainma*, with the accent on the last syllable. Riding habit with gloves, hat and veil for first entrance. Change to pretty summer gown and hat for second entrance. In Act II she wears an ingénue gown of pale lemon or pink, rather short. Hair ornaments and simple floral decoration of a contrasting color. To be played very "young" and unsophisticated.

DODO.—A handsome woman of twenty-four. Plenty of self-assurance. Play the part with plenty of abandon, but with a deep touch of emotion in the third act. Dodo does as she pleases and has always treated men as her slaves. Plenty of shoulder shrugs and Frenchy gestures and a slight tendency to be "stagey" on all occasions. In Act I she wears tan and red walking dress, large red hat trimmed in poppies. Bright red parasol and large red hand-bag. Carries poodle during first scene. In Act II she wears a very elaborate costume with train. Immense head-dress and rather garish effect of trimming and jewelry. In the original production the character made a big hit with a drapery of orange sateen trimmed in black jet and with a large yellow and black bird on her left shoulder. On her last entrance she wears an elaborate opera cloak. Heavy make-up.

MRS. CLINGER.—Similar to Amy, but somewhat more mature in style and more vivid in coloring. In the original production Mrs. Clinger (who was a blonde) wore a grass-green satin with over drapery of white silk and wreath of green leaves in hair. Carries large fan in Act II. Play the part rather sentimentally, but at no time forgetting her position in the best society.

ANGELINA.—Aged eight. Bright, quick and saucy. A pronounced type of the *enfant gâté*. Short skirts and hair arranged with huge ribbon bows. Red and white suit in Act I, and party dress of pink in Act II. Lines to be spoken loudly and learned letter perfect.

DORIS.—Aged eighteen. Pretty ingénue costumes similar to Gwendolyn's. Her hair may be down in curls. For last entrance wear a neat traveling suit, hat and coat and carry suit-case.

MRS. SPIGGOT.—Long black dress, cut perfectly plain. Old-fashioned black bonnet. Old-fashioned cloak of black. Nose-glasses. Black grip and umbrella. No colors and no trimming. Black silk mitts.

EUPEPSIA.—Aged sixteen, and dressed exactly like her mamma. Face pale.

MISS LONGNECKER.—Flowered summer dress, in Act I, with bright ribbons. Large flower-garden hat. Gaudy parasol. Nose-glasses. In Act II she wears an evening gown cut en train, but rather severe. Quantities of many colored flowers. Large head-dress of many colors. Large red feather fan.

LULU.—In Act I conventional maid's costume of black with white linen collar and cuffs. Neat white apron and cap. In Act II gray dress, ankle length. Dainty white lace apron and cap trimmed in long pink streamers. Very coy and *chic*. Quick movements, and speaks rather loudly and in a confident manner.

AUNT PARADISE.—An old mahogany-colored mammy. Use dark-brown grease paint. Large red bandanna on head. Dark calico dress, the skirts starched very stiff and standing out like a balloon. Crosses kerchief on breast and large gingham apron. In Act II yellow turban, bright calico dress, trimmed in lace and bright ribbons. Green sash. Much cheap jewelry. Large earrings. Fancy white apron, very, very small and dainty. Walks with a decided limp and stands with her hands on her hips.

FOUR LITTLE SPIGGOTS.—Small children dressed like Professor and Mrs. Spiggot. No colors worn.

PROPERTIES

ACT I.—Grass mats and palms to dress stage for garden scene. Also natural boughs of trees tacked in wings and overhanging stage gives a good effect. Natural vines on wall with artificial yellow roses. Large tree with circular seat, garden table with two garden chairs, lawn seat surrounded by parlor screen. Dust cloth for LULU. White gauze fan on stage. Bandanna for MEEK. Lorgnette for MRS. SHINE. Basket of daisies for DORIS. Chair on stage with opening in back large enough to admit the head of BILLY. Umbrellas for SOLOMON, SEMIRAMIS, HEMACHUS, EUPEPSIA and the FOUR SPIGGOTS. Scarab tie-pin for SOLOMON. Bag with letters for DODO. White poodle dog for DODO. Telegram for BILLY.

ACT II.—Library furniture. Practical fireplace with opening large enough for DUN to enter. Leather couch and large easy chair. Potted palm. Candelabrum and clock on mantel. Lantern and sack and suit-case for DUN. Wine decanter and glasses on table. Box of cigars for LULU. Auto horn off stage L. Lavender stocking for AUNT PARADISE, also telegram. Brooch for DUN to put in BILLY's pocket. Two one-dollar bills for BRIGHTON. Writing material on desk. Check-book for BRIGHTON. Lady's hat and cloak for SEMIRAMIS to tear. Blue light from window c. for moonlight effect. Red light from fireplace for final tableau.

ACT III.—No change.

The Hoodoo

ACT I

SCENE.—*A lawn. Set house, rather elaborate, with steps leading to porch, down L. Garden backing. Wall runs across stage at back. Arched entrance in wall at C. Wood wings R. and L. with natural boughs attached. Vines on wall with yellow paper roses. Lawn seat down L. surrounded by screen. Large tree down R. with circular seat. (This tree may be omitted and a bower of palms with seat for two arranged.) Garden table with two garden chairs up R. C. Lights all on. Bright music, may be a wedding march, to take up the curtain.*

(Curtain rises on empty stage. After a slight pause LULU enters from the house down L. She stands on the steps with her arms on her hips and views the scene in a disgusted manner.)

LULU. Just look at this lawn! It's not enough for 'em to be mussin' up the entire house a-spoonin' in every room of it and makin' extra work for me, but they got to come out here and look at the moon! *(Comes down C.)* It's got so that I have to give this front lawn as much attention as the parlors. I hate wedding parties anyway. *(Dusts.)* They think that just because you get an extra tip or two that you can do the work of twenty. *(Notices screen at L.)* Carried out the parlor screen! It's a pity that some folks can't spoon enough in the house. *(Disgustedly.)* And look how they've hid themselves in! Must have been afraid some one would 'a' saw 'em. It couldn't have been the bridal couple, for they don't care. It was Billy Jackson and that widow. Or maybe it was Billy Jackson and Gwendolyn—or Billy Jackson and Doris. *(Dusts at L.)* He's a wise guy all right, all right—and keeps the three of 'em guessing who's going to land the prize. And I'll bet

that all the time he's engaged to some girl away from here. Yes, it was him. Here's some cigarette stubs and a little pink chiffon bow. That's from the widow. (*Loudly.*) No wonder he wanted the screen around him! (*Crosses to R.*) And this is the bridal bower. No, here's some more of Billy Jackson's cigarette stubs—and a white gauze fan. That's Gwendolyn's. (*Puts fan in dress.*) That must have been later in the evening. (*Arranges pillows on seat at R.*)

(AUNT PARADISE *appears on steps.*)

AUNT P. (*with arms on hips*). Is dey all back from deir ride yet?

LULU. Not yet.

AUNT P. How many more's comin' to-day, honey?

LULU (*sitting at R., indolently*). Well, there's Mr. and Mrs. Spiggot. He's a professor somewhere in Missouri.

AUNT P. (*grunting*). Humph! Poor relations.

(*Limps down steps to C.*)

LULU. And they'll bring a whole bunch of little Spiggots.

AUNT P. (*throwing up her hands in horror*). More chilluns! Great Day ob de Trumpet! We's got one child here already and she's mos' done upso't de whole house. If one little Angel can cause so much devilment, what's gwine to happen when we gits a whole house full ob little Spiggots? (*Sits L.*) Is dey any more comin'?

LULU. Yes, there's a cowboy coming from Texas.

AUNT P. A cowboy! Great Day ob de Trumpet! I'm gwine to gib notice sure. I simply *ain't* gwine to cook fo' no cowboy. No mam!

LULU. He's a friend of Mr. Early's. His picture is a dream and he's worth a lot of money. Me for Mr. Cowboy.

AUNT P. Do you reckon dat he'll be liberal wid any ob dat money?

LULU. You bet he will. You can count on a ten from him sure.

AUNT P. (*slowly smiling*). I guess I'll stay. Who else is comin'?

LULU. I think that's all. Oh, no—there's Miss Longnecker.

AUNT P. Miss Longnecker. How come dey invite her to dis weddin'?

LULU. Oh, she's Amy's old school-teacher.

AUNT P. (*looking at screen*). What's dat parlor screen doin' out here in de front yard?

LULU. Why, Paradise, don't you know what that's out here for? Last night every one came out to see the moon, and when you look at the moon you've got to look in couples, and when you look in couples you need screens. *I know.*

AUNT P. I neber yet saw a weddin' dat wasn't de startin'-point ob 'bout half a dozen other weddin's. Dat Mistah Billy Jackson sure is a flirtatious man, he sure is.

LULU. That's the truth, Paradise; he's got three strings to his bow.

AUNT P. (*counting on fingers*). Miss Gwendolyn an' Miss Doris, an' who else?

LULU. Why, the widow, of course.

AUNT P. Who dat?

LULU. Mrs. Clinger. Little Angel's mamma.

AUNT P. You don't tell me. Is she settin' her cap for him, too?

LULU. Yes, her widow's cap.

AUNT P. And which you reckon he's in love with?

LULU. In love? (*Laughs.*) Billy Jackson doesn't know what love means.

AUNT P. I'll sure be glad when all dis yere weddin' doings is ober. It's too much excitement fo' old Aunt Paradise.

(ANGELINA *appears on steps.*)

ANG. (*coming down c.*). Well, you two are taking it easy, I must say.

LULU (*rising quickly*). Little girls should be seen and not heard.

ANG. (*pertly*). Tell it to Sweeny. Say, Aunt Paradise, where's the bunch?

AUNT P. (*rising with difficulty*). Where's de *what*?

ANG. The bunch. Maw and Mr. Billy and the bride and groom and the whole side-show.

LULU (*dusting at r.*). They've gone riding.

ANG. And they didn't take me. They sneaked off, that's what they did. Sent me down to the post-office to mail some letters. That's a nice way to treat me. I won't be the ring-bearer in their old wedding now, so I won't. I don't care if the old ring don't never get bored.

AUNT P. Lulu, when you-all get done cleanin' come down in de kitchen, I got something to tell you. (*Limps to porch.*)

LULU (*at R.*). Something about B-i-l-l-y J-a-c-k-s-o-n?
(*Spells name.*)

ANG. (*at C.*). Billy Jackson. I guess I can spell Billy Jackson, if I am only eight. Go on and tell her all your old secrets about Billy Jackson. I know something worth two of that.

AUNT P. Dat chile gwine to upsot dis yere whole house. She sure is.

ANG. Want to know what I know, Aunt Paradise? Well, I'll tell you. I saw you give those little piccaninnies that fried chicken and that angel cake last night.

AUNT P. Hush your talk, you! Dat chile sure gwine to end bad, she sure is! I neber gib no piccaninnies nothin'. De idea! Why, chile, I's a sustainin' member of de Daughters of Zion, I is! You-all better hush your talk, or I'll hab de ole conjure-woman take you away in her big, black bag, and bury you deep—in de grabeyard.

ANG. Skidoo to you. Tell those fairy-tales to Sweeny.

AUNT P. Great Day ob de Trumpet! Ain' she scand'lous? Dat chile sure gwine to end bad. She sure is.

[*Exit into house at L. muttering.*]

LULU. You ought to be ashamed to worry old Aunt Paradise so.

ANG. Is that so? Well, you look out that I don't worry you.

LULU (*loftily*). You don't know anything about me.

ANG. Oh, don't I? (*Imitates LULU's voice.*) "Mr. Jackson, how dare you kiss me!" I guess that'll hold you for a while.

LULU (*much confused*). What—when—did you hear that?

ANG. Yesterday in the hall, and if Mr. Jackson don't give me a big box of chocolates, and fifty cents, and a new hair-ribbon of Nile green, I'll tell everybody what I heard and what I saw.

LULU (*coming close to her*). I'd like to shake you.

ANG. (*proudly*). You forget yourself. And besides—you're afraid.

LULU. You'd better keep your eyes on your gay mamma, instead of on other people.

ANG. I'll tell mamma what you said.

LULU (*losing her temper and speaking loudly*). If you dare to, I'll —

Enter MR. MALACHI MEEK, from C.

MAL. (*coming down c. and speaking to ANG. who is R. C.*). Ah, good-morning, little lady.

ANG. (*politely*). Good-morning, Uncle Malachi.

MAL. (*smiling*). Have you a little kiss for me this morning?

ANG. Sure I have. Have you a little quarter for me?

MAL. (*shortly*). No, I haven't. I like little girls to kiss me for myself alone.

ANG. 'Try Lulu there; I ain't that kind. (*Skips to porch.*) Lulu's had more experience than I have. (*Laughs.*) Morning, Uncle Malachi. (*Runs off L.*)

LULU (*singing as she arranges pillows down R.*). "Nothing's worth while but dreams of you, Dearie, my dearie!"

MAL. (*straightening up, looking at LULU, putting on specs, looking again, taking out bandanna handkerchief and flirting it at her quickly, then looking around to see if any one is looking. LULU sings all through this, but glances at him now and then coquettishly*). Hem! Lovely morning.

LULU. It is so. (*Sings.*)

If you love me don't be bashful,

Take my little hand in thine.

If you want a kiss, just ask me,

I am sure I won't decline.

MAL. (*making a funny slide to her at R.*). Good-morning, my dear.

LULU (*affecting surprise*). Why, it's Mr. Meek.

MAL. And how is little Lulu-Wulu this morning?

LULU (*dropping eyes bashfully*). Oh, Mr. Meek!

MAL. I had so much trouble in tying my necktie this morning. Does it look all right?

LULU. You need a little more on this side.

(*Arranges it; he slips his arm around her waist.*)

MAL. Fix it pretty, little Lulu.

LULU. Why, Mr. Meek, look at your arm.

MAL. Can't. I'm looking at your eyes.

(*Starts to kiss her.*)

(MRS. PERRINGTON-SHINE *appears on porch.*)

MRS. P.-S. (*looking through lorgnette*). Why, father! I'm surprised.

MAL. Yes, I'm somewhat surprised myself.

MRS. P.-S. Lulu, you may go into the house. I'll speak to you later. (*Comes down to c.*)

LULU. He just asked me to tie his tie.

(*Crosses back stage to porch.*)

MRS. P.-S. (*severely*). That will do.

LULU. Yes'm. [*Exit in house, tossing her head.*]

MRS. P.-S. (*at c.*). Now, father, what was the meaning of that?

MAL. (*nonchalantly*). Simplest thing in the world. She was just tying my tie.

MRS. P.-S. You've been flirting with the servants.

MAL. Now, my dear Rosabella —

MRS. P.-S. I shall have to discharge that girl. She's a designing creature. (*Loudly.*) And to think it has come to this. You are old enough to be her grandfather.

MAL. (*at R.*). That's just it. She's the most innocent girl in the world.

MRS. P.-S. (*sarcastically*). She's about as innocent as you are.

MAL. Now, Rosabella —

MRS. P.-S. Don't speak to me. My own father actually flirting!

MAL. The poor little thing was only doing me a favor.

MRS. P.-S. I'll discharge her at once.

MAL. You'll do nothing of the sort!

MRS. P.-S. Father! You forget yourself.

MAL. It was just her sympathetic nature.

(*Laughter outside.*)

MRS. P.-S. They're coming. We'll settle this matter later.

MAL. Yes, the later the better.

(*Down R. with MRS. P.-S.*)

Enter BILLY JACKSON, GWENDOLYN PERRINGTON-SHINE and MRS. IMA CLINGER from c., laughing and chatting.

BILLY (*coming down R. C. close to MRS. P.-S., but not seeing her. He is speaking to GWEN., who comes down c.*). And the joke of the whole thing was that she knew he was a married man all the time. (*Laughs loudly.*)

GWEN. (*not seeing* MRS. P.-S.). Oh, Mr. Jackson, you are so funny!

MRS. P.-S. (*majestically*). Mr. Jackson!

BILLY (*his face changing from smiles to sobriety, he turns slowly and faces* MRS. P.-S.). Good-morning, Mrs. Shine.

MRS. P.-S. Mrs. Perrington-Shine, please!

BILLY. Excuse me. Mrs. *Perrington-Shine*.

(MAL. *has crossed up C. and is conversing with* MRS. C. *in pantomime.*)

MRS. P.-S. (*severely*). That must have been a very humorous story that you were telling my daughter, Mr. Jackson.

GWEN. (*nervously*). Yes, indeed, mamma, it was. It was about —

MRS. P.-S. I was speaking to Mr. Jackson, Gwendolyn.

BILLY. Yes, it was a great story. It was about a barber named —

MRS. P.-S. I trust that it was a *moral* story, Mr. Jackson.

BILLY (*puzzled*). Moral? Oh, yes—(*drawling*) yes! There was a bully moral to it. In fact that was the best thing about it.

MRS. P.-S. Gwendolyn, I think you had better dress for lunch. We are expecting some other guests this morning.

GWEN. (*meekly*). Yes, mamma.

MRS. P.-S. (*crossing to porch*). Father!

MAL. (*up C.*). Yes, Rosabella?

MRS. P.-S. It's time for you to take your tonic. This raw morning air doesn't agree with you, and you know it.

(BILLY and GWEN. *busily engaged down R. C. talking.*)

MAL. (*annoyed*). I'll be there in a moment.

MRS. C. Don't let me keep you, dear Mr. Meek.

MRS. P.-S. Father!

MAL. Coming. (*Crosses to L. C. up stage.*) You'll excuse me, Mrs. Clinger?

MRS. C. Of course. We'll resume our conversation in the conservatory right after lunch.

MAL. (*delightedly*). Right after lunch. In the conservatory.

MRS. P.-S. Gwendolyn!

GWEN. Coming, mamma. (*Crosses to porch.*)

MRS. P.-S. (*aside to* GWEN.). You know my feeling re-

garding Mr. Jackson. I hope I won't have to speak to you again.

GWEN. But he's so interesting, and tells such funny stories.

MRS. P.-S. (*scornfully*). A mere clerk. (*Pause.*) I can't see why Brighton ever invited him to become one of the wedding party. (*Sees MAL. talking to MRS. C.*) Father!

MAL. Yes, Rosabella, I'm coming. (*Crosses to porch.*)

MRS. P.-S. (*loudly*). Don't forget that you are sixty-nine. [*Exit in house.*]

GWEN. (*on steps*). Good-bye, Mr. Jackson.

BILLY. See you at lunch.

(MAL. comes back to MRS. C.)

GWEN. (*pausing at door bashfully*). I enjoyed your story so much.

BILLY. Wait till you hear the second chapter.

MRS. P.-S. (*in house*). Gwendolyn!

GWEN. Yes, mamma. (*Runs in L.*)

MRS. C. (*to MAL.*). Don't forget the conservatory.

(*Laughs.*)

MAL. Right after lunch. Over the river.

(*Waves his hand gaily to MRS. C., and starts toward steps rapidly. Sudden twinge of rheumatism causes him to pause in agony. Then exit slowly, limping up steps and off L.*)

MRS. C. (*coming down L. C.*). I'm afraid Mr. Meek sometimes forgets that he is sixty-nine.

BILLY (*meeting her at C.*). Some ladies are fascinating enough to make Methusalem forget his age.

MRS. C. (*playfully striking him with crop*). Flatterer.

BILLY. I've been waiting all morning to tell you that.

MRS. C. But you were too busy with Miss Perrington-Shine, with the accent on the Shine.

BILLY. She's a cute little kid, isn't she?

MRS. C. Yes, and so interesting. I love to hear her say, "Yes, mamma!" Does she ever say anything else, Mr. Jackson?

BILLY. Oh, put a poison label on that Mister; I'm just plain Billy.

MRS. C. (*cooly*). Well—Billy, then.

Enter BRIGHTON EARLY and MISS AMY LEE from C. They come slowly down R., arm in arm.

BILLY (*at L.*). Hello, here's the twin cupids. Got here at last, did you? Took you half an hour to walk from the stable here.

AMY (*down R.*). I'm afraid I must go in, Bright. Isn't it time to dress, Ima?

MRS. C. (*down L.*). I suppose so. You excuse me, won't you (*slight pause*), Billy?

BRI. (*down R. C.*). Billy! Hello, she calls him Billy!

MRS. C. What's the difference? Aren't we all in the same wedding party?

BILLY. You needn't think that you're the whole show just because you are the groom.

BRI. I'm satisfied. I wouldn't trade places with any man on earth.

AMY (*giving his arm a playful little shake*). Bright, don't be silly!

MRS. C. (*going on steps*). Come, Amy, let's leave them to their cigarettes. See you after lunch (*slight pause*), Billy.

BILLY. Sure thing. In the conservatory?

MRS. C. Oh, I forgot the conservatory. That's reserved for sixty-nine. (*Laughs and exits into house L.*)

BRI. (*crossing with AMY to steps*). Hurry, dear; I'll wait right here.

AMY. It will take me only ten minutes.

(BILLY *crosses to R. I E.*)

BRI. It will seem an hour.

AMY. Silly boy!

(*Blows a kiss at BRI., and exits into house L.*)

BILLY (*down R.*). I caught that one, Bright. (*Sits.*)

BRI. Yes, you did! (*Comes to R. I E., and sits.*) Billy, old man, do you know that I'm the happiest fellow in the world? The wide, wide world.

BILLY (*sprawling and smoking cigarette*). That's what they all say.

BRI. They? Who?

BILLY. Oh, you know, those who are engaged and all that sort of thing.

BRI. (*enthusiastically*). Every time I see Amy I find some-

thing new to adore about her. I never knew what it meant to love a girl till now.

BILLY. Cut the comedy and remember whom you're talking to.

BRI. I mean real serious love. (*Lightly.*) Oh, of course there have been other girls——

BILLY. Yes, there *have* been other girls.

BRI. But never another one like Amy. Amy Lee. Why, her very name's poetry.

BILLY (*to audience*). And he used to be the star full-back of the state.

BRI. And her style. Billy, did you ever notice Amy's style? I always *did* adore that tender, wistful style.

BILLY. I remember when you adored quite another style.

BRI. Oh, what's the use of talking about old times?

BILLY. Dodo *was* a pretty little thing, wasn't she?

BRI. You're right, Billy, she was, and she had the dreamiest eyes and the freshest lips—shaped like a Cupid's bow—and say, Billy, do you remember how her hair used to curl over her ears? And the walks down by the lake, and the little suppers after the theatre, and the cute, careless little ways of her when she was on the stage. (*Sighs.*) Ah, Do was some girl! (*Quickly changes tone.*) But nothing to be compared to Amy. You see, I'm going to marry Amy.

BILLY. How soft you used to be about Dodo. You used to say that your love was like an ocean with a kiss on every wave.

BRI. Did I say that?

BILLY. You know you did.

BRI. That's pretty good. I'll have to hand it to Amy.

BILLY. I wonder if Do is still in St. Paul?

BRI. I suppose so. The last I heard she was playing leads with the Cummerson Stock. The matinée girls rave over her.

BILLY. Ever hear from her?

BRI. Of course not. That's a nice question to put to me.

BILLY. I beg your pardon. But when one's love is like an ocean with a kiss on every wave—you know——

BRI. (*sententiously*). Even the ocean creeps out at low tide.

BILLY. And the poor little waves snuggle down and go to sleep.

BRI. Don't be so sentimental. (*Rises.*) We'd better dress for lunch.

BILLY (*rising*). What time is it?

BRI. (*feeling in his pocket*). By Jove!

BILLY. What is it?

BRI. My watch. It's gone. I know I had it this morning.

(*Searches pockets and looks around stage.*)

BILLY (*searching*). Probably you lost it while riding.

BRI. I'll have the groom look for it.

BILLY. You don't suppose any one touched you for it, do you?

BRI. (*hesitatingly*). No.

BILLY. Blamed queer. You know I missed my pearl crop this morning.

BRI. That's so. Funny, isn't it?

BILLY. Well, not so blamed funny.

BRI. No, but it's a coincidence. I'll have Riley saddle the filly and see if I can find it in the road. Come along?

(*Goes up L.*)

BILLY. No, I'll wait here.

BRI. I'd hate to lose that watch. [*Exit C. to L.*]

BILLY. Poor old Bright, he'll lose his head next. No, he can't do that. He's lost it already. A man about to be married doesn't know whether he's alive or dead. Poor old Bright!

Enter MISS DORIS RUFFLES, C., with basket full of daisies.

DOR. (*coming down C., humming a song; she sees BILLY*). Hello, Billy.

BILLY (*coming to her*). Hello, Angel Cake. How's the headache?

DOR. I didn't have a headache. That was a bluff. I didn't care to ride.

BILLY. What! Didn't care to ride—with me?

DOR. With you and Gwendolyn and Mrs. Clinger and Amy. This wedding party has so many girls in it that it looks like a Suffragettes' convention.

BILLY. The more the merrier.

DOR. Wait till some more men come. Then you'll find that there are other birdies on Luella's hat.

BILLY. I hope that it won't make any difference between us, no matter how many men come.

DOR. Wait and see. You've been mighty attentive to

Gwendolyn, to say nothing of Mrs. Clinger. (*Musingly.*) Mrs. Ima Clinger. Ima Clinger—pretty name, isn't it?

BILLY. Now, Doris, you know I think of no one else but you.

DOR. I know you do. (*He tries to take her hand.*) That is when I'm here. (*Shakes her forefinger at him.*) Billy Jackson, you're a flirt. Prisoner at the bar, are you guilty or not guilty?

BILLY (*holding up left hand*). Not guilty, yer honor.

DOR. (*turning away*). Not that it makes any difference to me. Of course not. I'm used to flirts. But poor little Gwendolyn and poor little Mrs. Clinger. It's lucky for us that this party lasts only three days.

BILLY. That's the way with every good thing in life. But you're going to let me come to Columbus and see you, aren't you?

DOR. Columbus! That shows that you are a flirt. It's Mrs. Clinger who lives in Columbus. I live in Scranton.

BILLY (*quickly*). Of course. I meant Scranton. Every time I say Columbus, I mean Scranton. They're so much alike. High Street and Lackawanna Avenue, you know. I always *did* get those two towns mixed up.

DOR. Yes. And sometimes you get the girls mixed up, too.

BILLY. Doris, that's unkind.

DOR. (*holding basket up*). See what I've been doing this morning while you were riding. (*She pulls open-backed chair to c., and kneeling beside it arranges daisies.*) I've been gathering daisies.

BILLY (*kneeling back of chair, facing audience. Note: The garden chair used must have an opening in back large enough to admit BILLY's head*). You gathered me weeks ago.

DOR. (*with her face close to back of chair*). But you aren't a daisy.

BILLY (*putting his head through chair's back*). No, but you gathered me just the same.

DOR. (*plucking petals*). He loves me. He loves me not. He loves me! (*Sighs.*)

BILLY (*with his face close to hers*). He loves you.

DOR. He loves me not. Loves me. Not. Loves me. Not. He loves me, and here's the last one. He loves me not. Oh, Billy, he loves me not.

BILLY (*taking her hand*). Don't you believe it. He loves you better than anything else in the whole world.

(*About to kiss her.*)

Enter BRI., quickly, from C.

BRI. (*seeing them*). Oh, I beg your pardon.

(*Rushes into house L.*)

DOR. (*rising quickly*). Oh, that was Mr. Early. What will he think?

BILLY (*rising with chair around neck*). So it was. But we don't care what he thinks, do we?

(*Advances toward her at R.*)

DOR. (*laughing*). Why, Mr. Jackson, you look like you were in the pillory.

BILLY (*removing chair*). That's just like Bright. Got to come butting in every time I talk to a girl.

DOR. Has he ever caught you before?

BILLY. Now, you know he hasn't. (*Comes close to her.*) You know that I think that you — (*Takes her hand.*)

Enter ANG., from house. She runs to C

ANG. Oh, I saw you, I saw you, I saw you. And I'm going to tell.

DOR. (*running to steps*). Now see what you've done. Billy Jackson, you ought to be ashamed of yourself.

(*Runs into house at L.*)

BILLY (*sternly*). Angelina, come here.

ANG. (*at C.*). Won't do it.

BILLY (*at R.*). You're a nice little girl, ain't you?

ANG. Yes, I am. And I'm a *wise* little girl, too.

BILLY (*anxiously*). You're not going to tell any one what you saw just now, are you?

ANG. Oh, *ain't* I?

BILLY. Not if you're a wise little girl. You see I know the land where the chocolate drops grow.

ANG. (*coming to him*). Now you're talking business.

BILLY. And I'll bring you a big box right after lunch.

ANG. How big a box?

BILLY. Oh, a great big box.

ANG. Five pounds?

BILLY. Well, maybe.

ANG. It's got to be five pounds. And Bittersweets.

BILLY (*sighing*). Very well, little Angel.

ANG. Then I won't tell what I saw just now.

BILLY. That's a good little girl.

ANG. But I saw something yesterday.

BILLY (*alarmed*). What did you see?

ANG. You know. You and Lulu the maid. And she *is* a Lulu, too.

BILLY. For goodness' sakes, don't say anything about that, and I'll buy you the whole candy store.

ANG. I heard her in the hall. She said: "Mr. Jackson, don't you dare to kiss me!"

BILLY. You must have been mistaken.

ANG. (*positively*). I'm never mistaken. I want a new hair-ribbon, too. Nile green.

BILLY. I'll get you one.

ANG. And a sash.

BILLY. And a sash.

ANG. Say, if I were you I'd catch just one girl and keep her.

BILLY. Oh, would you?

ANG. Yes, and I'd get the one with the most money.

BILLY. Out of the mouths of babes.

ANG. I ain't a babe. I'm nearly nine. (*Crosses to c.*) I must go now. I won't tell on you. Honest, I won't.

BILLY. Angelina, what pretty eyes you've got.

ANG. (*drawing herself up*). That'll do now, Mr. Jackson. Don't you try to flirt with me. I already have a steady. (*Runs to porch.*) And he don't 'low no foolishness.

(*Runs into house L.*)

BILLY (*taking c.*). Ain't she the angel child? I'll have to wire dad for more money if I stay around her much longer. It's too bad folks don't leave their angels at home when they go to wedding parties.

Enter AUNT P., from house. She limps down to c.

AUNT P. Mistah Jackson, Mistah Early done sent me out heah to find you an' ax you would you please go over to de depott an' meet de one o'clock train. Some ob de jests is comin' in an' he say he busy wif Miss Amy.

BILLY. All right, aunty, I'll go right over.

AUNT P. (*holding out her hand for a tip*). 'Scuse me, Mistah Jackson, ain't you done forgot something?

BILLY. Why, yes. I came near forgetting my hat. Much obliged, Aunt Paradise.

(*Takes hat from table and exits c. to L.*)

AUNT P. (*looking very disgusted*). Ain't dat exasperatin' ? Some folks dat I knows ain't got de manners ob a watermelon. (*Hobbles to porch.*) Dey sure ain't, and dat's de Lawd's truf.

[*Exit into house at L.*]

Enter MISS LONGNECKER, C. She minces down c.

MISS L. I wonder if I'm too early for luncheon. I just met the sweetest man going down the lane, and he looked right at me. (*Giggles.*) I suppose he was one of the wedding party. And he was all dressed up in a riding suit. And he looked right at me. I certainly am a lucky, lucky girl to be invited to the Meek house. Folks always say it's such good luck to be in a wedding party. To think of little Amy Lee going to be married. A mere infant. It wasn't so very long ago that I was teaching her the A, B, C's in the public school. And now she is to be a bride to-morrow. (*Sighs.*) Heigh-ho!

(*AMY and BRI. appear on porch in morning costumes.*)

AMY (*running down c.*). Why, it's Miss Longnecker!

MISS L. Amy! (*She kisses her.*)

AMY. So glad to have you over to luncheon.

MISS L. (*holding AMY's hands and looking at her*). So this is the little bride.

AMY (*merrily*). Yes, and here's the little groom. Bright, come here. I want you to know one of my dearest friends. Miss Longnecker, this is Mr. Early. Mr. Brighton Early.

MISS L. (*shaking hands with him*). Delighted, Mr. Early. And congratulations, but we never can forgive you for taking our little Amy away from us.

BRI. Lucky fellow, ain't I?

MISS L. You certainly are.

AMY. You'll make me blush in a minute. Miss Longnecker is my old school-teacher, dear.

MISS L. Yes.

BRI. And not so very old either.

MISS L. (*giggling delightedly*). Oh, Mr. Early.

AMY. We received your kind remembrance this morning. It was so dear of you and just what we wanted; wasn't it, Bright?

BRI. Yes, indeed.

MISS L. I thought you would like it. Something useful as well as ornamental. I always give useful wedding presents.

BRI. I'm sure you do.

MISS L. Did it come through the mail all right? I'm a little bit doubtful of this parcel post affair.

BRI. Oh, yes, it came all right. Not cracked or chipped at all.

MISS L. Cracked or chipped? I'm afraid I don't understand.

BRI. I mean that it arrived all right.

MISS L. I don't believe that you know what I sent.

AMY. Oh, yes, we do. It was so appropriate. And it will look lovely in our little flat.

MISS L. Look lovely in your flat?

BRI. She means that it is becoming to her style.

MISS L. Becoming to her style?

AMY. And you were such a dear to think of anything so dainty.

MISS L. (*frigidly*). My wedding present was a new patent lawn-mower.

BRI. Yes, we knew. And we were both delighted. Every time I mow our lawn, I'll remember you.

MISS L. (*aside to AMY*). Isn't he a dear!

AMY. You must come in and meet the rest of the party.

MISS L. Who is to be the best man?

AMY. Billy Jackson. Haven't you ever met Billy?

MISS L. Not yet, but I think I've seen him. I met a young man going down the lane just now—and he looked right at me.

BRI. That's Billy.

MISS L. He looked perfectly charming.

BRI. Yes, that's a little way that Billy has.

MISS L. And I fancy I saw another one of the wedding guests at the post-office this morning. She was very pretty, and wore a tan and red walking dress with a gorgeous red hat trimmed in poppies.

AMY. I don't think she belongs here.

MISS L. It was a kind of an actressy hat, and begging my pardon, she came over to me and asked me if I could tell her where Mr. Early was stopping. She looked like an actress.

BRI. (*alarmed*). An actress!

MISS L. She carried a little white poodle trimmed with green ribbons.

BRI. (*aside*). White poodle! It's Dodo! Great heaven!

MISS L. I told her how to find the place. Probably she's a friend of yours, Mr. Early.

BRI. I don't recognize the description.

AMY. I was sure you wouldn't. Possibly she is an agent. But, Miss Longnecker, come with me and I'll show you your room. It's nearly time for lunch. (*Crosses to porch.*)

MISS L. Thank you. (*Follows her to porch and then turns.*) I'll see you at lunch, Mr. Early. [*Exit in house.*]

AMY (*blowing a kiss*). Bye-bye, Bright. [*Exit.*]

BRI. A little white poodle trimmed with green ribbons—and looks actressy. (*Sinks in chair.*) It's Dodo. And she's here. There's going to be a rumpus, I know there is. I can feel it in my bones. (*March music as entrance for PROFESSOR SOLOMON SPIGGOT.*) If Dodo ever meets Amy and Mrs. Perrington-Shine—oh, Great Scott! And I thought that this was going to be the happiest week of my life.

(*Music louder. Enter from L. U. E., SOL. and HEMACHUS SPIGGOT. Both are tall and slender and are dressed in rather seedy Prince Alberts and black trousers, rather short. White socks and low wide-toed shoes. Rather old-fashioned black vests cut high, pointed collars and seedy black four-in-hand ties. SOL. wears old silk hat and carries large black umbrella and cheap black suitcase. HEM. wears a wide-rimmed black hat, carries umbrella and suitcase like his father's. Both wear white cotton gloves. SOL. wears nose-glasses. After entrance there is a pause and they stand facing the audience in C., not seeing BRI.*)

HEM. (*after pause; Note: HEM. always speaks in monotone with unnatural pauses—like a child reciting his first piece*). Father—is this the place we are seeking?

SOL. (*looking at house*). Yes, I fancy so.

HEM. But, father—there are no signs of festivity, nor is the house decorated for the nuptials.

SOL. This is the place.

(*Takes a few steps down C. and sees BRI.*)

BRI. (*meeting SOL. at C.*). Surely it is?

SOL. Yes, it is.

BRI. (*shaking hands warmly*). My dear Cousin Solomon.

SOL. Brighton, Brighton, I am overjoyed.

(*Shakes hands warmly. End music.*)

BRI. And I knew you at once. Just think, it's been eighteen years since I saw you.

SOL. I would have known you anywhere. Although you were only five when last we met.

BRI. (*shaking hands again*). Dear old Cousin Solomon. Do you know, cousin, that you are the only relative I have in the world? No father, no mother, no sisters, no brothers, no uncles, no aunts, just dear old Cousin Solomon.

(*Shakes hands warmly.*)

SOL. (*feeling his hand that BRI. shook*). This greeting overwhelms me.

HEM. (*who during this scene has been standing at back watching, now comes down to his father's right*). Father—is this my kinsman?

SOL. Yes. Brighton, this is my son, my eldest. Little Hemachus. Hemachus Brighton Early Spiggot. Named after you.

BRI. All but the Spiggot. (*Shakes hands with HEM.*) I'm glad to meet you, Cousin Hemachus; your father is my dearest friend.

HEM. I reciprocate the greeting, Cousin Early.

BRI. And your wife, Mrs. Spiggot, where is she? (*To SOL.*)

SOL. Ah, what a disappointment! She is not here. Poor Semiramis—how she would have enjoyed this trip.

BRI. Poor Semiramis? She's not—(*pausing*) departed, is she?

SOL. Oh, no. Her health is very good. She intended to accompany me, but only yesterday little Cheops, our sixth little Spiggot, developed symptoms of fever. Poor Semiramis was forced to abandon the journey and attend to little Cheops.

BRI. Now, isn't that too bad? I've never seen Mrs. Spiggot—nor little Cheops either.

SOL. He's such a bright lad, is little Cheops. Only six, Cousin Brighton, and as intelligent as his father.

HEM. Father—I beg your pardon, father—but little brother Cheops is nearly seven. It is Rameses who is six.

SOL. Yes, so it is.

BRI. There seems to be quite a collection of little Spiggots.

SOL. Seven, Cousin Brighton. Hemachus here is the eldest. Then comes Euepsia, our eldest daughter, then Isis and Osiris, our twins, delightful children, I assure you. And then after the twins—who comes after the twins, Hemachus?

HEM. Ptolemy, father.

SOL. Oh, yes—I had forgotten Ptolemy. And Rameses and Cheops make the seven. And what a blessing they are to us, Cousin Brighton.

BRI. Yes, so I should imagine. Seven.

SOL. Mrs. Spiggot sent her regards and best wishes to the happy nuptial pair. As for myself I am delighted, cousin, that you are about to go over to the large majority. The bourne from which no traveler returns, the ——

HEM. Father—I beg your pardon, father, but Cousin Early isn't going to depart this life. He is about to be married.

SOL. Thank you, little Hemachus, that fact slipped my mind entirely.

BRI. And wait till you see her, cousin. She's a bird. An angel.

SOL. A bird?

HEM. An angel? But, father ——

BRI. She's got the Gibson girl backed off the fence, and we're going to be the happiest little pair of honeymooners that ever saw Niagara.

SOL. I rejoice with you. Your happiness is my happiness. I can never repay your many kindnesses to me, Cousin Brighton. You advanced me the necessary funds for my marriage, you paid for my European trip, you procured me my appointment in the university. All that I have I owe to you. Semiramis and the seven came from you ——

BRI. Not on your life. Why shouldn't I have been liberal with you? You were my only living relative.

SOL. I will never forget your kindness. And if ever I can repay ——

BRI. Now, don't speak of that ——

SOL. But I must speak of it. You have overwhelmed me with gratitude. It is for your sake that I am here mingling for the first time in many years with a festive throng. For your sake I shall be blithe and gay.

BRI. That's right. Butt right in and have a good time. I want you to forget your Egyptology and your university and

be one of us for a few days. We'll take a run over to the city and I'll take my last wild fling on the Great White Way. I'll bet I can show you something that you never saw in Egypt.

HEM. But, father —

BRI. Yes, little Rollo, you may go along too. You'll have the time of your young life.

SOL. I am very glad to hear that you are to be married, cousin. Semiramis and myself are overjoyed that you are about to settle down.

BRI. Yes, I have to settle down in order to settle up.

SOL. I have heard that the young lady is an heiress.

BRI. Right. And she's a dream as well.

SOL. Semiramis and myself were rather worried the last time we heard that you were to be married.

BRI. That was two years ago.

SOL. The lady was an actress or a performer, I believe.

BRI. Yes, Dodo De Graft, the Dazzling Daisy. But I haven't heard from her for nearly two years. She's probably dazzling some one else now.

SOL. I have ventured to bring you a little gift, Cousin Brighton.

BRI. (*shaking his hands*). Thank you, cousin. But it wasn't necessary.

SOL. I believe it is the custom. It is an ancient scarab.

BRI. A scarab? What's a scarab?

SOL. An Egyptian beetle. This is a mummified insect taken from a tomb of the Pharaohs.

(*Takes black box from pocket and gives it to BRI.*)

BRI. (*taking out the pin*). Oh, it's a beauty.

SOL. That little fellow is over four thousand years old.

BRI. Doesn't look his age, does he?

SOL. There are only seven in existence. (*Proudly.*) The Boston Art Museum offered me three thousand dollars for that scarab last year.

BRI. And you are giving it to me for a wedding present. (*Shakes his hands warmly.*) Dear old Cousin Solomon.

SOL. This is no ordinary scarab. There is a mysterious story connected with that beetle. It was sacred to the Egyptian Deity.

BRI. I like Egyptian Deities myself. (*Takes cigarette case from pocket.*) Have one?

SOL. Thank you, no. That scarab is the largest one ever

known. And it is said to have the peculiar property of bringing to its owner the favor of the great god Osiris.

BRI. And you are giving it to me. (*Shakes hands warmly.*)
Dear old Cousin Solomon!

SOL. It must be buried, however, for twenty-four hours.

BRI. Buried? What for?

SOL. When Kaa—that is the name of the scarab, Kaa—when Kaa passes into strange hands it is best to bury him for twenty-four hours in the ground, his native element.

BRI. But why?

SOL. The natural law of recompense. The favor of Osiris is yours as long as you keep the sacred scarab, but for twenty-four hours you must suffer the displeasure of all the other gods.

BRI. You don't believe all this Arabian Night's tale, do you?

SOL. Who knows? When I became the owner of the sacred Kaa I followed instructions and buried it for twenty-four hours. Then I dug it up and upon my word, Cousin Brighton, I've enjoyed the favor of the great Osiris ever since.

BRI. (*putting the pin in his tie.*) Well, old Kaa makes a good-looking scarf-pin, at any rate.

HEM. Father—can you not persuade Cousin Brighton to bury the scarab?

BRI. What's the use? What can all the Egyptian gods do to harm me? I'm the happiest fellow on earth. Going to be married in three days. I'll wear the scarab for a while just to see if there's anything in the theory.

SOL. I have often wanted to see its efficacy tested myself.

BRI. I'll wear it as an experiment. I don't fear the wrath of old Sirus.

Enter LULU from house. She comes down c.

LULU. Mr. Early, the special messenger from Tiffany's has just brought the three necklaces for you to make a selection.

BRI. Is he in the house?

LULU (*carelessly*). Yes, sir.

(Turns and sees HEM.; flirts with him.)

BRI. Cousin Solomon, if you will excuse me for a few minutes I'll have Lulu show you to your room. Take them to the corner room next to mine, Lulu. [*Exit in house.*]

LULU. Yes, sir. (*Crosses to HEM., touches him on the arm, droops eyes.*) Walk this way, sir. (*Crosses to porch.*)

HEM. (*keeping his eyes on LULU, follows her and bumps into SOL.*). Why, father!

SOL. You are forgetting your grip, little Hemachus.

LULU. This way, Mr.—Mr.—— What is the name?

SOL. (*seriously*). Spiggot, Solomon Spiggot. This is my eldest son, little Hemachus.

LULU. I'm pleased to meet you, Hem. Walk this way.

[*Exit, loftily.*]

HEM. I can't walk that way, but I'll do my best. Father—she called me Hem! (*Stands staring after LULU.*)

SOL. Come, my son.

[*Exit into house.*]

HEM. And she called me Hem. She called me Hem.

(*Falls up the steps and exits in house. Bright music for DODO DE GRAFT'S entrance; swells loud as she enters and ends when she speaks.*)

Enter DODO, C.; she pauses at back and looks around.

DODO. The chauffeur said that this was the place, and it has the look. American respectability plus New England architecture plus Hackensack furnishing. Poor Brighton! What a life he'll lead—here. (*Comes down c.*) There's no one around. (*Laughter in house.*) Ah, the wedding party! And I'm the uninvited guest. Come, Dodo, your little bomb is all ready to explode. Poor old Brighton; won't he be glad to see little Dodo! (*Sarcastically.*) *Won't he?* It's a shame to be cast for the heavy adventuress in their little domestic comedy, but business is business—and I'm too healthy to live on air.

Enter AUNT P. from L. I E.

AUNT P. 'Scuse me, lady, is you lookin' fo' somebody?

DODO. Yes; I was just about to ring.

AUNT P. Is you one ob de wedding jests?

DODO. I haven't quite decided yet. I want to see Mr. Early.

AUNT P. Yes'm. Come in. I'll denounce you to him.

DODO (*taking a dollar bill from her purse*). I wonder if you couldn't arrange to have him come out here?

AUNT P. Who, Mr. Early? Why, lady, he's de bridegroom.

DODO (*twirling bill*). Yes, I know. Suppose you go to

him privately and say that one of his old friends is out here, and wants to speak to him. Do you think you could do that?

AUNT P. (*reaching for the bill*). Yes'm, I *knows* I could.

DODO. Privately, remember. Don't let any one else know.

AUNT P. Yes'm. I'll do it so privately dat I won't know it myself.

DODO. That's right. (*Gives her the bill.*)

AUNT P. Jes' take a seat over there in de arbor, an' I'll hab him here quicker'n a telephone. [*Exit into house.*]

DODO (*crossing L. to arbor and looking at it*). Quite a little nest for a pair of turtle doves. I wonder if he calls *her* his little hyacinth bud—I wonder if he tells *her* that his love is like an ocean with a kiss on every wave. Brighton was such a poetical boy. (*Sits.*)

Enter GWEN. and BILLY, from R. I E., arm in arm.

GWEN. But mamma says that I mustn't go out walking with you any more.

BILLY. Yes, I know—but I'm here only for such a short time. In three days the wedding will be over, and then I'll have to go away.

(*They cross to C. DODO rises and listens unobserved.*)

GWEN. And maybe I won't see you again for ages and ages. Mamma is so particular.

BILLY (*as they stroll up R.*). Well, we'd better make hay while the sun shines. You *do* like me, don't you?

GWEN. I'm afraid I do. But mamma says —

BILLY. Yes, I know that, but mamma is in the house.

GWEN. I'm afraid she'll miss me.

BILLY. I hope she'll miss us both. A miss is as good as a mile.

GWEN. Mrs. Clinger will miss us too.

BILLY. Now, Gwen!

GWEN. But you *do* like me the best, don't you?

(*They stroll off R. U. E.*)

DODO. It's Billy Jackson, and still at his old tricks. That man would flirt with his own grandmother and fall in love with a wax figure.

Enter BRI. from house.

BRI. Paradise said some one wanted to see me.

DODO (*crossing to him with extended hand*). Brighton!

BRI. Dodo! I knew it, I knew it! (*Weakly.*)

DODO. You didn't invite me to your wedding, but I was sure that I'd be welcome anyway—so I came without an invitation. Aren't you glad to see me?

BRI. (*very sadly*). Oh, yes, I'm glad. I'm overjoyed.

DODO. Aren't you going to ask me in to lunch?

BRI. Come down to business, Dodo. What do you want here?

DODO. What do I want? I want an ocean of love with a kiss on every wave.

BRI. I don't know what you are talking about.

DODO. Oh, don't you? Well, I have a certain little package of letters right here in my shopping-bag that might refresh your memory.

BRI. (*aghast*). My letters! Give them to me.

DODO. That's exactly what I came all the way from St. Paul for.

BRI. Then you won't cut up rough—you *will* give me the letters?

DODO. Don't talk like a schoolboy! Don't you think that I have any self-respect, any pride?

BRI. Of course. But what are you going to do?

DODO. You have treated me shamefully, brutally. You won a trusting maiden's heart, then tossed it aside like a broken plaything.

BRI. This isn't melodrama.

DODO. No, my sense of eternal humor has saved the situation. I found myself deserted by my fiancé—I laughed. You left me, and for two long years I never heard a word from you—I laughed. I saw your wedding announcement in the papers last week—I laughed.

BRI. May I ask the cause of your merriment?

DODO. Certainly. You are marrying the orphan heiress of Larrimore Lee. I slave day and night to make eighty per. Why do I laugh? Because my days of drudgery are over. No more stock work in St. Paul—no more two shows a week and two performances a day. I'm going to be a New York star. I've struck a bonanza.

BRI. And the bonanza is?

DODO. Right here. This bundle of letters. You said, "Come down to business." I'll take you at your word. I

want thirty thousand dollars from you before this wedding takes place.

BRI. Thirty thousand dollars? Absurd. You've played in melodrama so long that everything seems like a play to you. I won't give you thirty cents.

DODO. Oh, yes, you will.

BRI. Not on your life.

DODO. For if you don't ——

(Slight pause. DODO smiles.)

BRI. Well, if I don't ——

DODO. There will be no wedding.

BRI. Don't you know that you are making yourself liable to an action for blackmail?

DODO. Blackmail? Such an ugly word. Not at all, Mr. Early. I have seventeen separate and distinct proposals of marriage all written by you. Seventeen! Don't think for a moment that you are talking to Little Lorraine the Deacon's Daughter.

BRI. No, I don't. Not for a moment.

DODO. You've heard my terms. What about it?

BRI. I won't be blackmailed.

DODO. You know Mrs. Perrington-Shine's objection to any newspaper notoriety. Miss Lee, your fiancée, would break off this match in a moment if I sued you for a breach of promise.

BRI. Do, you won't do that!

DODO. Thirty thousand dollars is a mere bagatelle to you. To me it means fame and fortune. I have a lawyer with me in this very town. Now take your choice—thirty thousand dollars and freedom or a suit for twice that amount. And you know how I can play on the sympathies of a jury.

BRI. I haven't got thirty thousand dollars.

DODO. Oh, yes you have. Your account in the Second National shows a balance of over fifty thousand.

BRI. I'll tell you what I'll do. You go to the hotel and I'll come over this afternoon and talk to you about it.

DODO. I'll not do it. I came to the wedding.

BRI. But you can't stay here.

DODO. Why not?

BRI. Because—because—well, because you can't.

DODO. A lovely reason.

BRI. *(taking her arm)*. Come now, Do, be reasonable.

DODO. I am reasonable. Thirty thousand dollars is reasonable.

BRI. Let me take you to the hotel.

(*He tries to lead her out. She refuses to go.*)

Enter SOL. from house.

SOL. Cousin Brighton! I hope I'm not intruding.

BRI. Not at all.

DODO (*at R.*). Introduce me to your friend.

BRI. Cousin, this is a friend of mine.

SOL. (*crossing and shaking hands with her*). I am delighted.

DODO. Thanks. You look it.

SOL. (*standing by DODO*). Is this your bonny little bride, Brighton?

BRI. Heavens, *no*.

Enter MRS. P.-S. from house. She comes down c.

MRS. P.-S. Brighton, lunch is about to be served. Ah, more guests? Friends of yours, Brighton?

(*AMY appears on porch.*)

BRI. Yes, this is my cousin, Professor Spiggot. Professor, this is Mrs. Shine.

MRS. P.-S. Mrs. *Perrington-Shine*.

AMY (*coming down L. C.*). Bright!

BRI. This is my fiancée, Miss Lee.

DODO (*coming a little forward*). Ah-hem.

(*Clears her throat.*)

BRI. (*in despair*). And this is —

MRS. P.-S. Your wife, Professor? How do you do, Mrs. Spiggot? (*Crosses to DODO and shakes hands.*)

SOL. But my wife, Mrs. Spiggot —

BRI. Has just arrived. (*To AMY.*) My dear, let me present you to my oldest friend, Professor Spiggot and Mrs. Spiggot. (*DODO, MRS. P.-S., and AMY form a little group chatting at R. BRI. grasps SOL.'s arm and pulls him down c.*) For my sake, cousin. I'm in an awful scrape. For my sake. This is Mrs. Spiggot.

SOL. But I fear, Cousin Brighton —

BRI. It will all come out right in the end.

SOL. I sincerely trust so.

MRS. P.-S. Come into the house. You must be tired after your long journey. (*Ladies cross to porch.*) You came all the way from Missouri, didn't you?

DODO. Oh, I'm from Missouri, all right.

[*Exeunt ladies, in house.*]

SOL. I cannot permit this deception to continue, cousin.

BRI. For goodness' sakes don't desert me now. A friend in need is a friend indeed.

SOL. But what would Semiramis say?

BRI. Semiramis?

SOL. My wife. My *real* wife.

BRI. She's miles away. She'll never know anything about it.

SOL. But my conscience isn't clear.

BRI. Neither is mine. Don't let that worry you.

SOL. But I fail to see the necessity for this impersonation.

BRI. This woman is trying to blackmail me.

SOL. Hand her over to the police.

BRI. Never. That's just what she wants. You see she's an actress I used to know in St. Paul. I was rather daffy about her in those days, and wrote her some letters.

SOL. Ah, ha! That's very grave, Brighton, very, very grave!

BRI. Don't I know it? Now, after two years she hears about my approaching wedding and turns up and threatens to sue me. She wants—thirty thousand dollars.

SOL. But why did you introduce her as my wife?

BRI. I had to introduce her somehow. And your wife didn't come. What's the difference, anyhow? It's only for a day or two.

SOL. But what would Semiramis say?

BRI. Semiramis needn't know anything about your other wife.

SOL. Great heavens! My other wife. Brighton, I am not a Mormon.

Enter HEM. from house. He crosses to SOL., and shakes his finger at him.

HEM. (*reprovingly*). Father—father!

SOL. Yes, little Hemachus?

HEM. I beg your pardon, father, but how many mothers have I?

SOL. Hemachus! The idea! What would Semiramis say?

HEM. That lady in the house insists that she is your wife. She says, and all the others say, that she is Mrs. Spiggot. Father, I am very, very much perplexed. How many wives have you, father?

SOL. Only one, little Hemachus.

BRI. Only one, of course. That lady in the house is a little—— (*Taps his forehead.*)

HEM. (*not understanding*). A little? (*Taps his forehead.*)

SOL. (*assuring HEM.*). Yes, little Hemachus, she's a little—— (*Taps forehead.*)

HEM. Father, I do not comprehend what a little (*bus.*) means.

BRI. She's off her trolley, just a little woozy up-stairs, bats in her belfry.

HEM. Father, what is Cousin Brighton saying?

SOL. He means that the lady in the house is *non compos mentis*.

HEM. (*giving a sigh of relief*). Oh, then she's not your wife?

BRI. Of course not—and never was. She's non mentis, er——what he said!

HEM. Father, forgive me. I hope that I have not acted with undue haste. I fear you will reproach me for what I have done.

SOL. What have you done?

HEM. I sent a telegram to mamma saying that you had another wife here. Father, have I done wrongly?

SOL. Goodness! What *will* Semiramis say?

BRI. (*aghast*). Sent a telegram to your mamma! Have you done wrongly? Cousin Solomon, drop him in the river—and tie a stone around his neck.

MAL. (*in the house*). Early, Early! Where is he? Thieves, thieves! We've been robbed. (*Enter on porch very much excited.*) Oh, Brighton, something awful has happened. You know the necklaces the jeweler sent for examination?

BRI. Yes, yes—what's happened to them?

MAL. Gone! Stolen from the safe in my room. There's a thief in the house.

BRI. Great heavens! Not those Tiffany necklaces!

MAL. All three of 'em. I put 'em in the safe not an hour ago.

BRI. Did you lock the safe?

MAL. Of course I did. Securely. I knew those necklaces were worth a fortune.

BRI. Twelve thousand dollars !

SOL. (*at R. with HEM.*). Cousin, this is horrible.

BRI. It's a nightmare.

MAL. I locked the safe and went to dress for lunch.

BRI. Who knew the combination ?

MAL. No one. Not a soul in the house except myself.
And the safe is a Patent Detroit.

BRI. Twelve thousand dollars !

Enter DODO from house—she comes down to BRI. at R. C.

DODO. Come, now, Bright. I've been bluffed long enough.
I want that thirty thousand—and I want it quickly.

MAL. Thirty thousand ! What does she mean ? (*At L.*)

BRI. Oh, she's — (*Taps forehead.*)

SOL. She's — (*Taps forehead.*)

HEM. Yes, she's decidedly — (*Taps forehead.*)

DODO. Is that so ? Well, I'll show you ! I'll expose the
whole outfit. This man —

(Bright music played softly.)

*Enter BILLY and GWEN. from L. U. E. BILLY comes down
L. C. to BRI. who is C.*

BILLY. Telegram for you, Bright. I got it at the office.

BRI. I'm almost afraid to open it. (*Tears it open.*) Great
heavens ! (*Sinks in chair staring at telegram.*)

BILLY. What is it ?

BRI. "Second National Bank suspends payment. Your
deposit thought to be worthless." That's the last straw. I'm
choking. (*He puts hand to throat and feels the scarab pin in
tie. Slowly takes pin out and looks at it.*) The scarab ! I'm
hoodooed. (*Throws pin on floor and tramps on it.*) Now,
we'll see if my luck will change.

*(Music swells to loud. All watch him curiously. SOL. and
HEM. at R. DODO at R. C. BRI., C. BILLY, L. C. MAL.
at L. GWEN. up L.)*

CURTAIN

SECOND CURTAIN

*(Characters all off. Enter AUNT P. from L. U. E.; she
comes down limping to C., sees the pin, picks it up and
pins it on her waist and exits into house, limping.)*

ACT II

SCENE.—*The library. Boxed interior with window in rear and two entrances at R. and one at L. Fireplace, practical and large enough to admit MR. DUN up L. In front of this is a large library table with chairs around it and reading-lamp, magazines, decanter and glasses on it. Large leather couch down L. Large leather chair down R. Library desk with chair between the two entrances at R. Chairs and palms ad lib. Ghostly music to take up the curtain.*

(The curtain rises and discloses an empty stage in total darkness. There is a pronounced pause. Then a light is seen from an electric flash or a dark-lantern in the fireplace.)

Enter DUN from the fireplace carrying a large sack. He moves stealthily and flashes the light at intervals.

DUN *(crossing to table, L. ; flashing light around)*. Hm ! Candlestick. Wonder if it's plated. No, it's the real thing. *(Examines candelabra with lantern.)* I need that for my drawing-room. *(Slips candelabra into sack.)* Look at the bric-à-brac. *(Crosses to mantel-shelf and takes ornaments and puts them in his sack.)* It ain't much, but every little bit helps. *(Turns from mantel and bumps into a chair, knocking it over and dropping his sack with much clatter.)* Damn !

(Grabs sack and limps to fireplace and exits in fireplace.)

AUNT P. *(peeking in R., with a lighted candle in her hand)*. Who dere ? Who is you ? Answer me, heah me, answer me ! Mmm ! I'm so skeered dat I'm white in de face. *(Crosses to table and turns on electric light. Lights all up.)* I knows I heard somethin', and dere's a-gwine to be trouble, kase I feels it floatin'. *(Sees chair overturned.)* Great day in de mawnin' ! Burglums done been here as sure as you're bo'n. Burglums or ghosteses or hants ! *(Straightens chair and arranges room.)* Dis here colored lady is a-gwine to git her another job, kase dis house is gittin' too skurious-like for me to reside in. It sure is. I don't objec' to live people 'round de house, but when it

comes to hants an' ghosteses, dat's when I'm a-gwine to quit. Couldn't eben eat ma supper in peace. Not a bite. Too much mystification in dis house fo' me. I needs something fo' my nerves.

(Pours glass of wine and is about to drink it.)

Enter LULU from L. with box of cigars. When door at L. is opened conversation and laughter are heard from the dining-room.

LULU *(close to AUNT P.)*. Look at that now!

AUNT P. *(dropping glass, which breaks)*. My lawsy massy kingdom come!

LULU. What's the matter with you? Got the willies?

AUNT P. Lawsy, is dat you, Lulu, honey? I thought dat it was a hant or a burglum! I'm skeerd purt' nigh to death. *(Angrily.)* Ain' you got no more sense dan to scare me data-way? You made me break dat glass.

(Picks up pieces and throws them out of the window.)

LULU. I guess it was your conscience that scared you. Drinkin' the fine wine you was. The very best, too, that Mrs. Shine only put out here for the wedding.

AUNT P. My nerves is so upsot dat I needs a little stimulation.

LULU. What's the matter with your nerves?

AUNT P. I dunno. You know, Lulu, I think dat I's conjured. Ebry blessed thing dat I's put my hand to dis ebenin' has turned out wrong.

LULU. Yes, I heard the missus complaining about the supper.

AUNT P. Ebrything went wrong. It ain't my fault. I's conjured. And dat ain't all. *(Lowers voice mysteriously.)* There's some mystification a-gwine on in dis house, and dat sure is de truth.

LULU. What do you mean?

AUNT P. I dunno what it is. Hants or ghosteses or something like dat. And dis colored lady is sure gwine to look for another situation. *(Loud laughter and applause in the dining-room.)* What's dat? What's goin' on in dere? It sounds like a circus-show.

LULU. It's more than that. It's that Mrs. Spiggot. She's the funniest thing! She can beat Billy Jackson telling a story.

AUNT P. Is dat de old man's wife ?

LULU. Yes. I wonder how she came to marry an old bone-head like him. He must have a lot of money.

AUNT P. What she doin' ?

LULU. Singing and play-acting just like a theatre lady. She's got every man in the bunch going.

(Puts cigars on table near fireplace.)

AUNT P. Is dey nearly through ?

LULU. They got as far as the cheese. They're waiting for Mr. Early. I wonder why he went to town at this time of night !

AUNT P. Gone after the police, I reckon.

LULU. What for ?

AUNT P. I told you dere's mystification goin' on. What'd you bring dem ci-gars in here for ?

LULU. For the men to smoke, of course. *(Crosses to L.)*

AUNT P. Where you gwine ?

LULU. Back to the dining-room. Why ?

AUNT P. I'm skeerd to be down in dat old kitchen by myself. Dat's why.

LULU. What are you scared of ?

AUNT P. Burglums.

LULU. There are no burglars here.

AUNT P. Is dat so ? Well, if dey hain't burglums, dey is hants. About an hour ago I had my supper all laid out on de kitchen table, ready to eat. I went to de ice-box to get some spring onions. My back wasn't turned more'n a minute. No, *mam*, not more'n a minute.

LULU. Well, what happened ?

AUNT P. I come back to get my supper—an' it wasn't dere.

LULU. Where was it ?

AUNT P. How do I know ? It was gone. Not a bite left. And, Lulu, honey, dere wasn't a soul in dat part ob de house, 'cept'n' me. Now, if dat wasn't hants—den what was it ?

LULU *(laughing)*. Why, Aunt Paradise, that's a joke on you.

AUNT P. Wasn't no joke, neither. What become ob dat supper ?

LULU. Why, you ate it and forgot all about it.

AUNT P. No, *mam* ! *No, mam* ! When I eats, I eats—and I knows it. I didn't hab a bite. It's hants. An' I hain't

gwine to stay 'round no place where dere's hants. Dey hain't healthy.

LULU. Maybe your fellow took the lunch.

AUNT P. I hain't got no fellow. I'se a 'spectable married widow, I is; wif six little black-an'-tans. You know I hain't got no fellow.

LULU. Well, I have—and that reminds me. (*Takes a handful of cigars.*) He does so love to smoke good cigars.

(*Goes to door at L.*)

AUNT P. Wait a minute. Don't leabe me alone. Something's liable to carry me off.

LULU. You've been dreaming and had a fine nightmare. (*Takes more cigars.*) Don't be afraid, Aunt Paradise.

[*Exit, at L.*

AUNT P. (*looking after her*). Look at her take dem ci-gars! If dat ain't de nerviest gal I eber seed. She sure is. (*DUN steals cigar box and exits in fireplace.*) Her fellow loves to smoke good ci-gars, does he! Umm! What right she got stealin' our ci-gars? Dat's de trouble wif dese white help—dey ain't got no reprehensibility. I hain't got no fellow, but I reckon ma gentleman friend likes to smoke good ci-gars his own self. (*Crosses to table, not looking at it.*) Fac' is, I'se got seberal gentlemen friends—and dey *all* likes good ci-gars. (*Feels for box without looking at it.*) She hain't de only one who's got gentlemen friends. (*Looks—starts—backs away from table staring at it.*) Umm! Umm! Great day in de mawnin'! (*Positively.*) Now, I *knows* dat dere is some mystification a-goin' on in dis house. Dis colored lady gwine to pack her grip *right away!* My feelings tells me dat I'd better go while de goin' is good. 'Kase hants hain't healthy. Dey sure hain't!

(AUNT P. *starts to exit R., and BILLY enters from L.*)

BILLY. Hello, aunty.

AUNT P. (*frightened*). G-g-good-ebenin', Mr. Jackson.

BILLY. What's the matter? I didn't frighten you, did I?

AUNT P. No, sir. I hain't frightened. I'm jes' skeerd, dat's all.

BILLY. What's scared you?

AUNT P. De burglums.

BILLY. Why, there are no burglars here.

AUNT P. Dat's what I said. I'se said all along dat it's hants !

BILLY. Well, if any hants get after you, aunty, just call on me.

AUNT P. Yes, sir. If dey gets after me, yo'se a-gwine to hear me call on somebody.

Enter MAL. from L.

MAL. Just a moment, Paradise.

AUNT P. (*returning to R. C.*). Yes, sir ?

MAL. You haven't seen any suspicious looking people around the house to-day, have you ?

AUNT P. No, sir. I hasn't *seen* 'em.

MAL. No one who looked as if he were after something ?

AUNT P. Nobody but Mr. Jackson dere. He's de mos' suspicionest person I'se seen.

BILLY. Why, you don't think that I look that way, do you ?

AUNT P. (*chuckling*). You been flirtin' round here so much, dat you look like you was after a wife.

MAL. I guess that she's on to you, Billy. That isn't what I mean, Paradise ; I mean some one who doesn't look right.

AUNT P. Dat dere Spiggot man don't look right to me.

MAL. I mean a thief, a burglar !

AUNT P. Lawsy, Mr. Meek, is dey a thief here ? I knowed it, I knowed it !

MAL. You see, Mr. Early lost his watch this morning. And there are other things missing.

AUNT P. Yes, sir, my supper is missing.

MAL. You haven't found anything to-day, have you ?

AUNT P. Nothin' but dis pin. (*Takes scarab pin from dress.*) I found dat out in de front yard.

BILLY. It's a scarf pin. Probably one of the men lost it. I'll ask them. (*AUNT P. gives the pin to BILLY, who pins it on his coat.*) Here's a dollar for you, aunty. (*Gives coin.*)

AUNT P. (*pocketing coin*). Thank you, Mr. Jackson. (*Crosses to door at R.*) You hain't near as suspicious as you was. (*Chuckles and exits R.*)

MAL. Brighton should be back by now.

BILLY. Did he go to the police headquarters ?

MAL. Yes. And to the bank. That boy had enough trouble this afternoon to do him for the rest of his life. And the peculiar thing of it was, that it all came in a bunch.

(*Auto horn heard.*)

BILLY. There he comes now.

MAL. What a pleasant little woman Mrs. Spiggot is. So entertaining.

BILLY. Yes, she *is* entertaining.

MAL. And how well she recites. That last little poem was positively touching.

BILLY. Yes, that's a little specialty of hers—touching.

MAL. She is quite an addition to our party.

BILLY. I guess Brighton thinks that she's a multiplication.

Enter BRI. from R., with auto coat, cap and goggles.

BRI. (*coming c.*). Boys, congratulate me! That telegram was all a mistake. It wasn't the Second National at all. It was the Fourth National that failed.

BILLY (*sinking in chair at L. c. weakly*). The *Fourth* National?

BRI. Yes, I didn't lose a cent.

BILLY. Every penny that I have in the world is in the Fourth National.

BRI. Billy!

BILLY. Fact, every cent. Dad said that it was the safest bank in town.

MAL. This is awful. Are you sure that it was the *Fourth* National, Brighton?

BRI. Yes, that's a settled fact. I never knew that you had your money there, Billy.

(Places coat, hat, goggles and gloves on hall-tree.)

BILLY. Every cent. Father used to be a director before he moved to Jersey.

MAL. There seems to be some awful fatality pursuing us.

BRI. Yes, first the diamond necklaces disappeared.

BILLY. Then you got the fright of your life about *your* money.

MAL. And now you've lost yours.

BRI. To say nothing of Dodo.

MAL. Dodo? What is Dodo?

BRI. Oh, nothing—that's just a little term of reproach, that's all. Dodo bird, you know.

BILLY (*still seated and staring gloomily before him*). I don't suppose that there would be any use of my going to the city to-night.

BRI. No, there's nothing you can do to-night.

BILLY. Are you sure it was the Fourth National?

BRI. Absolutely. I went around to the bank and found it closed, with a sign of Failed on the door.

BILLY. Well, I guess that means me for the rolling mills. No matrimony for me now.

BRI. Were you thinking of that?

BILLY. One never knows what bad luck is liable to happen.

MAL. Is there anything that I can do, Mr. Jackson?

BILLY. Not a thing in the world, thank you, Mr. Meek.

MAL. Brighton, you'd better come in and have a bite to eat. The ladies are waiting at the table.

BRI. All right, Uncle Malachi. (*Comes down to BILLY and gives him his hand. BILLY rises and grasps BRI.'s hand warmly. Pause.*) You know me, old man.

BILLY. Thank you, Bright.

BRI. I'll help you all I can. Our little fraternity pins stand for something more than words.

BILLY. I know how you feel, Bright.

BRI. Now don't be down-hearted. Maybe the failure is not as bad as reported. I'll drive you over to the city the first thing in the morning.

BILLY. Don't say anything about it to the ladies.

BRI. Of course not.

MAL. Keep a stiff upper lip. Probably there is some mistake. (*Crosses to L. door.*) Coming, Brighton?

[*Exit in dining-room. Laughter heard.*]

BRI. You haven't got a monopoly on the trouble market, Billy boy. Just think of me and Dodo. I've seen her lawyer and mine. I suppose there's nothing else to do but to give her thirty thousand dollars.

BILLY. It's a swindle.

BRI. I guess we're in the same boat. But remember our old college motto: Every cloud of adversity shows a man what true friendship means.

(*They clasp hands. Pause.*)

BILLY. You'd better go in and get some dinner. They're waiting.

BRI. All right. Let's forget our troubles for to-night, Billy.

BILLY. Nothing can be done now.

BRI. So it's no use to worry. [*Exit in dining-room, at L.*]

BILLY (*sinking in chair and staring in front of him*). Every cent that I had in the world. I never can marry little Doris now. Poor little kid, she said she would give me her answer to-night. It will have to be Mrs. Clinger. She's the heiress of the bunch. It's the only way. Poor little Doris! I hope she didn't take me seriously. Poor little Gwendolyn, too. (*Crosses to R.*) She won't care, but I'm afraid that little Doris will. It's an awful thing to be in love with three girls at the same time. No, not three girls—two girls and a widow. A rich widow, and from the present outlook the rich widow is going to cop the matrimonial prize. Oh, Lord, then I'll have to be a father to that little angel, Angelina. I won't do it. But her mother is an heiress. Well, maybe I can stand little Angelina. But poor Gwendolyn and poor little Doris. [*Exit, R.*

Enter cautiously from the fireplace DUN. *He comes in to C. stealthily.*

DUN. I guess I've got everything that can be got. Now let me see how I'm going to get away. (*Starts to dining-room at L. Laughter heard.*) Nothing doing yet. Back to your chimbley, Sandy Claus, back to your chimbley.

[*Exit in fireplace.*

Enter GWEN. and AMY from L., chatting. They cross to R. and sit.

AMY. I think Mrs. Spiggot's a dear! And such a bright, sparkling girl, too.

GWEN. She's awfully funny. I'm afraid that mamma doesn't approve of her. She doesn't seem to see the points of Mrs. Spiggot's jokes.

AMY. And what a pretty dress she has on. I always thought that professors' wives and faculty women were dowdy. But she isn't at all.

Enter MRS. C., MRS. P.-S. and DORIS. They form a group in the center of the stage. All seated.

MRS. C. I wonder where Billy Jackson is?

AMY. Looking at the moon, I suppose.

DOR. Yes, Billy adores the moon.

MRS. C. (*affectedly*). And so do I.

AMY. That's because there is a man in it. We all adore it.

(Enter DODO, ANG. and MISS L. They sit at L.) We are so pleased to have you with us, Mrs. Spiggot. I like you already. You are Bright's only cousin, aren't you?

DODO. Yes, his only one.

ANG. He'll have a bunch of cousins when he gets married. Amy has got cousins to burn.

MRS. C. Angelina!

ANG. Well, she has.

MISS L. Don't you find it rather dull in your college town, Mrs. Spiggot?

DODO. Oh, no; I never find it dull anywhere.

AMY. But a college set are generally so slow and depressing.

DODO. I don't think that any one ever accused *my* set of being slow and depressing.

DOR. You don't look like a professor's wife at all, Mrs. Spiggot.

DODO. Don't I? Now that's strange, isn't it?

MRS. C. I am sure Mrs. Spiggot gets her hats from a milliner, and somehow one never associates a milliner with the head-gear of a faculty woman.

AMY. And they always wear square-toed shoes. Your shoes aren't square-toed, are they?

DODO (*showing foot*). The idea!

MRS. C. And they always wear crystal beads on their dinner dresses in the faculty set.

DODO. Well, my set isn't like the usual faculty set.

ANG. Mrs. Perrington-Shine?

MRS. P.-S. Yes, dear.

ANG. Why is it that every girl in this bunch is crazy about Billy Jackson?

MRS. C. Angelina!

MRS. P.-S. Ima, if you can't make that child behave, you had better send her to bed.

MRS. C. You hear that, Angelina?

ANG. It's funny that I can't mix in the talk without getting squelched every time.

MRS. C. That will do, young lady. I can't imagine where she picks up such low expressions.

ANG. From Billy Jackson.

MISS L. I have often wanted to visit your college, Mrs. Spiggot. Do you do much work in the museum?

DODO. I never do museum work. My line is legitimate stock.

MRS. P.-S. And are you interested in suffrage, Mrs. Spiggot?

DODO. Of course I am. And for it strong. Every girl in our company is an out-and-out suffragette.

DOR. What a very congenial company you must have.

DODO. Yes. You ought to see us after the last performance on Saturday night. (*Sarcastically.*)

AMY. Do you have your suffragette meetings on Saturday night?

DODO. Yes, with a string band and a little lobster lunch.

MRS. C. How very original. So you always have lobsters?

DODO. Yes, both human and à la Newburg.

MRS. P.-S. I'm heartily in sympathy with the suffrage movement. I think woman has been man's slave too long.

DODO (*sweetly*). I'm sure you never were anybody's slave, dear Mrs. Perrington-Shine.

MRS. P.-S. Of course not. I referred to women in general. The time at last has come for us to assert ourselves. We have kept silent too long.

DODO. Fancy a woman keeping silent!

MISS L. We'll show man that we are his equal.

MRS. P.-S. Of course we will.

MRS. C. And more than his equal—his superior.

MRS. P.-S. (*applauding*). Our place is at the ballot-box as well as in the home.

DODO (*applauding*). You're right! My views exactly!

MRS. P.-S. I should like to see any man try to dictate to me.

DODO. I wonder what would happen.

DOR. But, Mrs. Perrington-Shine, don't you think that we women can trust the men to do our voting for us?

MRS. P.-S. When you've been married twice, as I have, you won't trust a man to do anything. You won't trust them at all.

AMY. I'm willing to let my husband do the voting for me.

MISS L. But suppose you haven't a husband?

AMY. Then I'd want a man before I'd want a vote.

MRS. C. But wouldn't it be grand if the women got in power and could make the men do just exactly what we wanted them to?

DODO. Whenever that happens there won't be a bachelor left in America.

AMY. Bright says that he will vote just the way I want him to.

MRS. P.-S. When you are married you'll learn not to believe everything your husband says. There's nothing opens a girl's eyes quicker than marriage.

DODO. And the funny thing about it is that every girl is anxious to have them opened.

MISS L. I'd like to have a hand in making the laws of this country. So many things need reform.

MRS. P.-S. The most crying need for reform is the entire male sex. Why, statistics prove that the married woman is more likely to lose her mind than any other human being.

DODO. There's a reason for that. You see she is always giving her husband a piece of it.

MISS L. This country is far behind several of the European countries in the matter of suffrage. Why, in Denmark they even have women soldiers and women sailors.

DODO. Women sailors! Just imagine women sailors in this country. If they were on a ship and some one called out,—“A sail! A sail!” every woman would be looking for the bargain-counter and wondering if they were going to give trading stamps.

MRS. C. (*rising*). The men seem to be having a session.

AMY (*rising*). I wonder if we couldn't have a little dance?

GWEN. Yes, mamma. Can't we have a little dance?

MRS. P.-S. I have no objection.

AMY. Come on, girls, let us push the furniture back in the parlors.

MRS. P.-S. I'll call the maid.

[*Exit*, R.]

DOR. We'll all take turns at the piano. Come on.

[*Exeunt* AMY, GWEN., DOR., MRS. C. and ANG.]

MISS L. (*rising and crossing to R.*). Does your husband dance?

DODO (*forgetting*). My husband? Oh, you mean the professor?

MISS L. Yes. He's such a brilliant man, isn't he?

DODO. Oh, awfully.

MISS L. He must travel a great deal?

DODO. He does. I never saw a brilliant man yet who didn't go out at night.

MISS L. Are you interested in Egyptology, too?

DODO. Oh, yes, I'm interested in all the ologies.

MISS L. What a unique country Egypt is, isn't it?

DODO. It's more than unique; it's décolleté.

MISS L. And the camels and the pyramids and the Sphinx. How I should like to see the Sphinx!

DODO. She's the greatest woman in the world. She hasn't spoken for twenty centuries.

MISS L. And the picturesque sheiks.

DODO (*not comprehending*). They were picturesque, weren't they?

MISS L. I suppose that you saw many an old mummy in your travels?

DODO. You're right. But you can see many an old mummy without leaving this town.

MISS L. Did you visit Tripoli?

DODO. I think so. But I only left my card. She wasn't at home. (*Music from R.*)

MISS L. Amy is playing the piano. Shall we join them?

(*Crosses to R.*)

DODO. In a minute! (*Rises and crosses R., quickly.*)

MISS L. Do you dance, Mrs. Spiggot?

DODO. Do I? Ask me! Does a duck swim?

[*Exeunt ladies at R.*]

Enter BRI. from L.

BRI. Every one thinks that Dodo is the professor's wife. I'll have to pay her that money and get rid of her at once. It's hitting me pretty hard just at this time. I wonder if the police can locate the thief. They said they'd have a plain-clothes detective over here right away.

Enter SOL. from L.

SOL. Cousin Brighton, Cousin Brighton, I am very much agitated.

BRI. *You* are? Look at me. I'm so agitated that I'm afraid to sit down for fear some new calamity will happen.

SOL. I went to my room just now, Cousin Brighton, and what do you think?

BRI. I'm too worried to think. What happened?

SOL. Two trunks full of feminine apparel were in my room. Several gowns and lacey things were on my bed! Oh, Brighton, what would Semiramis say! And on my dresser were false hair and other articles whose use I can only surmise. I was appalled, dear cousin, appalled!

BRI. You must have got into the wrong room.

SOL. Not at all. These articles all belong to the lady you said was my wife. Oh, I fear that that was a grave mistake.

BRI. Oh, they were Dodo's? What did she say?

SOL. Fortunately for me she was not present.

BRI. You see they naturally supposed that that was the room to put her in. Don't worry, cousin, it will all turn out right.

SOL. But I should worry. Her things must be taken from my room. I was mortified and shocked, and then—what would Semiramis say?

BRI. I'll fix it up. Where did they put little Bright-eyes?

SOL. Little Bright-eyes? I fear I do not comprehend.

BRI. Little Rollo—you know, your little—my little cousin.

SOL. Oh, you mean little Hemachus?

BRI. Yes, little Hemachus. What room did they give him?

SOL. The one right across the hall from mine.

BRI. I'll have Dodo put in there.

SOL. (*aghast*). In there! Impossible. I'll never permit that. Semiramis would be horrified.

BRI. Why would she?

SOL. Put her in there? Innocent little Hemachus? Shocking!

BRI. Oh, he'll have to move over with you, of course. That will settle the whole business.

SOL. My dear cousin, I am not used to deception. Please tell the household that this lady is not my wife. Couldn't you say that she is the tax collector or a book agent? Please, please, don't insist on her being my wife.

BRI. Oh, we can't change that now. It's working all right. We'll get rid of her to-morrow.

SOL. But suppose Semiramis learns of all this. How could I ever explain to Semiramis?

BRI. Don't explain. Tell her it was all a mistake. Every wife has to listen to that fairy tale some time or other.

SOL. You don't know Semiramis. She is of a suspicious nature.

BRI. Too bad, dear old Solomon; we'll do our best to keep the whole thing from Cousin Semiramis.

Enter DODO from R.

DODO. Hello, hubby.

SOL. Please don't call me hubby.

DODO. They're starting a dance in here. Come on and join your little, trusting wifie.

SOL. Cousin Brighton, what shall I do?

BRI. Do as she says, of course. It's the easiest way.

DODO. I'm waiting for you, Solly.

SOL. (*crossing to her*). Please don't call me Solly.

DODO. Come on. See you later, Cousin Brighton.

(*BRI. throws sofa pillow at DODO, who laughs and exits R., followed by SOL.*)

BRI. I'd give a thousand dollars if I'd never seen that woman. (*Sadly.*) And they call her the Dazzling Daisy!

Enter AUNT P. from L.

AUNT P. Mister Early, is dat you? I'm sure glad you is back.

BRI. Why, what's wrong?

AUNT P. Dis yere whole house is upsot, dat's what's wrong. Burglums, thieves, hants and ghosteses in it.

BRI. What's been stolen now?

AUNT P. Purt' nigh eberything we's got. I ain't had a bite ob supper, and Lulu put a box ob ci-gars right dere on de table—and where is dey now?

BRI. Some one took them away, I suppose.

AUNT P. Not some *one*, some spook. Dat's what it was, a spook. I knows. I was right here in de room de whole blessed time. She put de box ob ci-gars right dere. I seen her when she done it. I was a-lookin' right at dat box, when all ob a sudden it begun to get smaller an' smaller *an' smaller!* Den finally it went popp! an' turn right into air. I went ober an' looked all 'round an' it wasn't nowhere in sight. Now, if dat ain't hants, what is it?

BRI. I think that you're troubled with too much imagination, Aunt Paradise.

AUNT P. Well, if my 'magination makes me act dataway, I'm sure gwine to see de doctor an' hab my 'magination taken out.

BRI. Come now, aunty, didn't you or Lulu take that box of cigars for some of your retinue?

AUNT P. Some ob my which?

BRI. Some of your admirers.

AUNT P. No, sah! *No, sah!* I'm a 'spectable married

widow, I am, an' I wouldn't steal a thing under de sky. 'Deed I wouldn't. Much less a old box ob ci-gars. Don't hab no use fo' ci-gars nohow.

BRI. You and Lulu have worked here a long time, haven't you?

AUNT P. Yas, sah. Goin' on eight years, an' nobody eber scused us ob stealin' anything yet. I hain't no thief, an' I don't want no deflections cast on my character. I tells you, Mr. Early, it's hants. Dat's all. I'se done said ma say an' dis colored lady gwine to hunt fo' another situation right away. People is people, an' hants is hants, an' I ain't gwine to take no chances wid 'em.

BRI. (*in a low voice*). Aunt, I have reason to believe that there is a burglar concealed around the house.

AUNT P. My lawsy massy, great day in de mawnin'! Maybe we'll all wake up to-morrow an' fin' ebery las' one ob us killed stone dead. I'm gwine to pack ma trunk. Dis yere house ain't healthy no more.

BRI. You'd better wait till to-morrow.

AUNT P. (*crying*). I'll bet a pretty dat I don' neber see no mo' to-morrow. I'm skeerd, Mr. Early. I don' want to be murdered. Lawd, no, I sure don't.

BRI. The police will protect us.

AUNT P. If it's burglums dey will, but if it's hants—umm, what we gwine to do den? Stole my supper, too. Didn't eben get a bite.

BRI. Then you know it isn't hants. Hants don't eat.

AUNT P. Don't dey?

BRI. Of course not. It's burglars.

AUNT P. Don' make no difference. I'm skeerd to death anyhow. (*Comes to him.*) Mr. Early, I'se got ten dollars an' sixty-seben cents in a labender-colored hose in ma room. Reckon dem burglums found dat?

BRI. You'd better go up and see.

AUNT P. Yes, sir. Dat's jes' what I'm gwine to do. (*Crosses to L.*) Lawsy, lawsy, what's become ob de candela-brums? Is dey done tooken dat, too?

BRI. By George, it *has* disappeared! Well, what do you know about that?

AUNT P. I dunno nothin' 'tall about it. (*Looks in mirror.*) Great day in de mawnin'! Jes' look at me in de lookin'-glass. Jes' look at me! I'se actually turnin' so pale dat I didn't recognize myself. I tells you, Mr. Early, dey's scandal-

ous doin's in dis house, dey sure is! I hope dem burglums ain't discovered dat labender-colored hose wid dem ten dollars an' sixty-seben cents. [Exit R., limping.]

BRI. (*looking at the clock*). It's after eight. I don't see why they don't hurry and send that detective here.

Enter AMY from R.

AMY. Bright, why don't you come in and dance?

BRI. I'll be there right away.

AMY. There's nobody dancing except Uncle Malachi and Miss Longnecker. Where's Billy?

BRI. Smoking out on the veranda.

AMY. Come on. Doris is playing our favorite one-step.

BRI. All right. On with the dance.

[Exeunt AMY and BRI.]

Enter BILLY, R. I E.

BILLY. I smoked four cigars and think I have found the solution for my trouble. I'll propose to the widow. I'll be a papa to little Angelina and a staunch oak for the clinging vine.

Enter MRS. C., R. U. E.

MRS. C. Billy!

BILLY. Ima! I was just thinking about you.

MRS. C. I always think about you. (*Softly.*)

BILLY. Do you think about me enough to — (*Aside.*) It's awful, but I'll have to risk it.

MRS. C. You seem to be excited, Billy.

BILLY. I am. I'm awfully excited. I always get awful excited every time I fall in love.

MRS. C. In love? Have you fallen in love?

BILLY. You know I have. Ima — (*Looks at her, then aside.*) Oh, I can't do it.

MRS. C. Bashful boy! Why can't you continue? You said Ima and then you paused. What did you want to tell Ima?

BILLY. I wanted to — Say, don't look at me! (*He turns her face away.*) That's better.

MRS. C. You said that you got excited every time you fell in love.

BILLY. Don't you think that it's warm in here?

MRS. C. I hadn't noticed it. But you were saying —

BILLY. Somehow it seems awful hot this evening.

MRS. C. Shall we go out on the veranda? It's cooler out there. You were saying —

BILLY. Yes, let's go out there. It's darker—I mean, I can't see you so plainly out there.

MRS. C. How bashful you are.

BILLY. Do you know, Ima —

Enter ANG. from R.

ANG. Ma, ma, I want you to come in and make some one dance with me.

MRS. C. Run away, now, Angelina. I'm engaged.

ANG. That's just what you wanted then, ain't it? To get engaged.

MRS. C. Angelina! I'll have you taken up-stairs if you don't run away.

BILLY. See, the moon is shining on the veranda. Let's see if it will shine on us.

MRS. C. All right. (*Turns to ANG.*) You heard me, young lady!

BILLY (*going out R. I E.*). She'll go back to the dance. Come on.

MRS. C. All right. You were saying, Billy, that —

BILLY. I'll finish it on the veranda.

[*Exeunt BILLY and MRS. C., R. I E.*

ANG. That Billy Jackson's a mean old thing. I'll get even with him, see if I don't. I know what I'll do. (*Crosses to R. U. E.*) I'll put some quinine in ma's face powder. And, Mr. Billy Jackson, when you taste that, I guess you'll wish you hadn't been so smart.

[*Exit, R. U. E.*

Enter DUN, with sack, from the fireplace. He enters cautiously and comes C.

DUN. I got to get out of this. (*Looks in R. U. E.*) They're havin' a dance in there. Maybe I can get out over the veranda. (*Crosses to R. I E.*) There's nobody there.

(*Sound of a kiss heard at R. I E.*)

MRS. C. (*out R. I E.*). Now, Billy, behave.

DUN. Nothing doing. (*Goes up to window in C.*) Men smoking on the porch. Surrounded. Can't get out. And me with the prettiest load of swag I've had for a year. Well, I guess I'll have to be old Mr. Sandy Claus again. (*Crosses*

to table up R. *Pours drink and drinks it. Pours another and holds glass up.*) Here's to easy pickings and bridal parties. May they live long and prosper.

Enter AUNT P. from L. hastily, limping. DUN darts behind the screen up R.

AUNT P. *(with lavender stocking)*. Burglums neber touched ma private bank. Ebry cent ob my ten dollars an' sixty-seben is here. I don't beliebe dat it's burglums nohow. A burglum couldn't a-made dat ci-gar box disappear right before my very eyes. I wonder if I's conjured. Maybe I'm one ob dese here spiritual trance mejums. *(Holds out both hands toward table like a hypnotist.)* Move. Move, dog-on you, move. If I is a mejum, I've done lost ma power. I seen a man at de Opera House make de tables an' chairs an' everything else in de room move whenever he told 'em to. *(Turns to screen.)* Move! Move! *(DUN wriggles screen.)* Umm, great day in de mawnin'! I'm a mejum. Move! Stop! Look at dat thing, doin' jest what I says. I got de whole house conjured. *(Makes motions like hypnotist toward screen. Every time her hands go up, DUN makes the screen go up. Finally the screen moves slowly toward the fireplace, AUNT P. continuing her gestures violently. DUN exits in fireplace.)* I'm a wizard, dat's what I is. *(Crosses to screen timidly.)* Got power ober everything. *(Touches screen and jumps back frightened.)* Now *dat's* what made dat box ob ci-gars turn into air. It jest felt ma presence.

(Takes screen and places it in original position, up R.)

Enter BILLY and MRS. C. from R. I E.

MRS. C. Just to think that we're engaged. It's too good to be true. And we'll be so happy, Billy. Just you and me and Angelina.

BILLY. Angelina?

MRS. C. Yes. Just we three. I'll go right in the parlor and announce our engagement.

BILLY. Oh, let's not announce it right away. Let's keep them guessing for a few days. I'll tell you what we'll do, we'll announce our engagement right before Bright's wedding.

MRS. C. Isn't that romantic? And just to think that I'm engaged again.

BILLY. Aunt Paradise, where is Mr. Early?

AUNT P. In de parlor. He's dancing old Grizzly Bear. (*Looks off* R. U. E.) Look at him! Look at him!

BILLY. Tell him I'm looking for him in here. Tell him as soon as the dance is through.

AUNT P. Yes, sir.

[*Exit*, R. U. E.]

MRS. C. When we are married shall we live in New York?

BILLY. No, I think I'll move to Salt Lake City.

MRS. C. To Salt Lake? Why do you want to move there?

BILLY. I'm going to join the Mormons.

MRS. C. The idea! But if you do that I'll join them, too. And so will Angelina.

BILLY. Dear little Angelina!

(*Clenches fists and shakes them.*)

Enter LULU from R. U. E.

LULU. Mrs. Clinger, Angelina has gone to sleep, and Mrs. Perrington-Shine sent me to tell you.

MRS. C. Thank you so much, Lulu. I'll go to her at once. Wait for me, Billy.

(*Exit*, R. U. E. *Exit* LULU, L., *flirting with* BILLY.)

BILLY. I can see my finish with little Angelina. I'll have to put her to bed every night at nine o'clock. But her mother's an heiress, and goodness knows I need the money.

Enter DOR. *from* R. U. E.

DOR. Billy!

BILLY. Doris!

DOR. I've been waiting for you to come and dance with me.

BILLY. And, believe me, I've wanted to.

DOR. I didn't think that you'd neglect me this way after what you said to me this afternoon.

BILLY. I haven't neglected you. I just heard some bad news, that's all.

DOR. Oh, I'm so sorry.

BILLY. A little financial difficulty.

DOR. You are in trouble?

BILLY. Yes, in pretty badly.

DOR. Then I want to tell you my answer to what you asked me this afternoon. I *will* be your wife whenever you wish. I'll share your trouble with you.

BILLY. But, Doris, I've lost a lot of money.

DOR. Do you think I accepted you on account of your money? You have your position—we'll save together.

BILLY. Doris, you're a dear, but I couldn't ask you to sacrifice yourself——

DOR. It's no sacrifice. I'm willing to marry at once. (*Pause.*) Well, why don't you say something? Billy, don't you want me?

BILLY. I want you more than anything else in the world. Doris, you're all right, pure gold all through.

(*BILLY starts to embrace her when GWEN. enters.*)

GWEN. I beg your pardon.

DOR. Don't mention it. I was just going back to the dance.

GWEN. They want you to play a two-step.

DOR. All right. I'll go. Wait for me, Billy.

[*Exit, R. U. E.*

GWEN. You aren't dancing this evening.

BILLY. No, I've been out looking at the moon.

GWEN. Alone? I don't think it any fun to look at the moon alone. (*Pause.*) And I haven't seen the moon all evening.

BILLY. It's still shining.

GWEN. I'm afraid to go out on the veranda alone at night.

BILLY. I'll go with you. Come on.

GWEN. I hope mamma stays in the parlors. Mamma doesn't approve of my going out on the balcony in the moonlight with a young man.

BILLY. It's different with me.

GWEN. Yes, I suppose it is. For I'm going to marry you—and that makes it different, doesn't it?

BILLY. Marry me?

GWEN. Yes. Mamma is opposed to it, of course. So I've determined to elope. She has no right to blight all my future life. Has she?

BILLY. Of course not. But eloping is such an awful thing.

GWEN. I think it's too dear for anything. I'd just love to elope.

BILLY. But do you really care for me?

GWEN. Of course I do. I'm perfectly wild about you. You're such a cute little man.

BILLY. I'm afraid that your mamma doesn't care to look at me in the light of a son-in-law.

GWEN. That makes no difference. Mamma isn't going to marry you, is she?

BILLY. I hope not.

GWEN. And I've simply set my heart on eloping. Come on, I want to see the moon. (*Crosses to R. I E.*)

BILLY. I wonder which of them I'm engaged to!

[*Exit with GWEN., R. I E.*]

Enter DUN from fireplace.

DUN. While they're all enjoyin' themselves down here, I'll jest take a glance at the rooms up-stairs. All them fancy dressers must have a bunch of jewels and things that'll come in handy for me. [*Exit, L.*]

Enter HEM. from R. U. E.

HEM. I am quite surprised at father. He's in there dancing and leading in the frivolity of the occasion. And he seems to be enjoying himself. Ah, father, father, I fear that it is well for you that Cousin Brighton is married only once in a while.

Enter LULU, R. U. E.

LULU. Oh, excuse me, sir. I didn't know that any one was here.

HEM. Well, there isn't any one here except myself.

LULU (*coming down to him*). Only yourself—(*pausing, she looks at him; he catches her eye and looks away quickly. Bashful business*) and myself.

HEM. If you are about to pursue any of your household duties, don't let me interrupt you.

LULU. I was just going to lock up the windows for the night. Oh, Mr. Hemachus!

HEM. Yes?

LULU. I've got something in my eye.

HEM. Dear me, dear me! Let me see! (*Crosses to her.*)

LULU. And, oh, it hurts something fierce.

HEM. I fail to perceive anything whatsoever.

LULU. Oh, I can't see at all. (*Takes his hand.*)

HEM. Dear me, I am very sorry. (*Takes her other hand.*)

LULU. I can see better now.

HEM. And does your eye still pain you?

LULU. It's not as bad. I hope it won't disfigure my eyes. Some folks say that I have such pretty eyes.

HEM. Do they?

LULU. Yes. But you don't think so, do you?

HEM. They seem to be quite normal to me. Possibly the corona is——

LULU. Say, where are you from, anyway, Mr. Hemachus?

(Crosses to L.)

HEM. I'm a student at Drinkwater University.

LULU. Are you one of them wild, dashing, fly-by-night students?

HEM. I'm proud to say that I am. I am the sergeant-at-arms of my class.

LULU. Isn't it rather a funny class?

HEM. Funny? Not at all. It is characterized by an exceedingly solemn demeanor and a fixity of purpose most indomitable.

LULU. Aw, quit your cuttin' up!

HEM. Have you ever been at Drinkwater?

(Comes close to her.)

LULU. No, sir. I've never saw a student close-like before.

HEM. Lulu, I think that I could learn to like you. We might become very good friends. The girls at college all say that I'm such an awful cut-up.

LULU. You're all of that, all right, all right!

MRS. P.-S. *(off R. U. E.)*. Lulu!

LULU. Yes, mam, I'm coming. *(Crosses to door R. U. E.)* Don't cut-up too much while you're here, Hemachus. I'm afraid that you're too giddy for us poor girls.

(Laughs and exits R. U. E.)

HEM. How very peculiar! I wonder what father would say—and mother! Poor mother! She would enjoy this festive occasion so much. It's too bad that she had to stay at home with poor little brother Cheops. Father does not seem to miss her. And that poor unfortunate crazy woman who imagines that she is father's wife! How very strange! *(Crosses to R. I E.)* I think I'll go out on the veranda and look at the moon and meditate. *(Starts to exit, R. I E.)*

GWEN. (*outside R. L. E.*) Billy, please stop! What would mamma say?

HEM. There seems to be some one out on the veranda. I wonder if they are looking at the moon and meditating!

GWEN. Billy Jackson, you're just awful!

HEM. Some one is in need of help, I dare say. Probably I can assist her. [*Exit, R. I E.*]

Enter DUN, from L., with a suit-case.

DUN. Gee, what a rich haul! Diamonds, wedding presents, real lace and rolls of money. The guy who is getting married suspects something is wrong. Maybe he'll start a search. I'll have to put a decoy on some one else. Then I'll make a clean getaway. [*Exit in fireplace.*]

Enter BILLY from R. I E.

BILLY. Little Hemachus will keep Gwendolyn quiet for a few minutes at least. She wants me to elope. Each one of the three expects me to marry her. I can't marry them all—I'm not triplets. Poor little Doris! (*Sinks in chair at L.*) She's the queen of the bunch. Wanted to help me because she thought that I was in trouble. (*Yawns and stretches himself in chair.*) I wish she had Mrs. Clinger's money. Then that would fix things beautifully. Gee, I'm sleepy. I'll have to go over to the city the first thing in the morning and see about the Fourth National. Maybe it's a mistake after all. Then I won't have to marry Mrs. Clinger. (*Nearly asleep.*) Then that would leave me free to marry Doris! Pretty little Doris of the daisies. Doris! Doris! (*Sleeps.*)

Enter DUN from fireplace.

DUN. I'll drop this string o' diamonds in this guy's pocket. Then if there's any trouble, he'll be the goat. (*Puts necklace in BILLY's pocket.*) I guess I've got everything worth getting now. I might as well make a getaway. (*Crosses to R. I E.*) Somebody out there. This bunch don't do nothin' but set on the porch and spoon. Back to the chimby, Sandy Claus, back to the chimby! [*Exit in fireplace.*]

GWEN. (*appearing in door R. I E.*) Billy! Where are you, Billy? (*Enters.*) Oh, there he is, and he is asleep! Isn't he a dear! Billy! (*Takes his hand.*)

BILLY (*sleepily*). We'll take another round, just like the

GWEN. (*shaking him*). Billy, it's your little Gwen!

BILLY (*jumping up*). What's the matter? I had a horrible dream. I thought that I was being married.

GWEN. To me?

BILLY. No, to Mrs. Clinger and Angelina.

GWEN. No wonder you thought that it was a horrible dream.

BILLY. I thought that you were showing the moon to little Hemachus.

GWEN. He does nothing but talk astronomy. (*Shyly*.) I'd rather show the moon to you.

HEM. (*appearing in the doorway R. I E.*). There's a cloud over the moon.

GWEN. (*pulling BILLY R. I E.*). Oh, Billy, come on. I do want to see the cloud over the moon.

HEM. (*coming c.*). But the moon's light is entirely obscured.

BILLY. I always shine the brightest when the moon is dark. Come on, Gwen!

GWEN. I hope mamma stays in the parlors.

[*Exeunt BILLY and GWEN.*]

HEM. How very peculiar!

Enter MRS. P.-S., MAL., MRS. C., SOL., DOR., MISS L., BRI. and AMY.

SOL. Ah, little Hemachus, here you are. (*Down R.*)

HEM. Yes, father, here I am. (*At R. C.*)

DOR. I am rather tired, Mrs. Perrington-Shine; I think I'll say good-night.

MRS. P.-S. It's rather late. I think we had all better retire. Professor, where is your wife? (*At L. C.*)

SOL. Semiramis? She's taking care of little Cheops.

MISS L. She was dancing the one-step a moment ago. (*Up L.*)

SOL. Oh, yes, to be sure. I think she is in the drawing-room.

Enter DODO.

DODO. Mrs. Perrington-Shine, I don't know when I've had such a delightful evening. (*At L. C.*)

MRS. P.-S. We are so glad you were able to come. I suppose that little Cheops is better? (*At c.*)

DODO. Cheops?

BRI. (*hastily*). Oh, yes, your little Cheops. He's better, isn't he? (*Up c.*)

DODO. I didn't know I had a little Cheops.

BRI. He had the fever, you know.

DODO. Oh, yes. I remember now. You see, Mrs. Perrington-Shine, I'm always forgetting little things like that.

MRS. P.-S. Where is Gwendolyn?

MRS. C. And where is Mr. Billy Jackson? (*Up r. c.*)

HEM. They are out on the veranda. He is showing her the moon under a cloud.

MRS. P.-S. (*crossing to R. I E.*). Gwendolyn! Gwendolyn, I say!

Enter GWEN. and BILLY from R. I E.

GWEN. Here I am, mamma.

MRS. P.-S. I told you distinctly not to go out on the veranda. And with a young man! I'm frustrated, Gwendolyn, frustrated. (*Crosses to L. c.*)

GWEN. It's only Billy, mamma. (*Crosses to L. c.*)

MRS. P.-S. I see it is. Young man, what is the meaning of this?

BILLY. Well, you see, Mrs. Shine, we were —

(At extreme R.)

MRS. P.-S. Mrs. Perrington-Shine, please.

BILLY. Yes, of course. Mrs. Perrington-Shine. We were only looking at the moon.

HEM. But the moon was under a cloud. (*At r. c.*)

SOL. That will do, Hemachus. (*At R.*)

HEM. Yes, father!

MRS. P.-S. Gwendolyn, I am waiting for an explanation. Why have you disobeyed me?

GWEN. Why, mamma. It was perfectly proper. You see, we're engaged.

ALL. Engaged!

MRS. C. Engaged! Mrs. Perrington-Shine, Mr. Jackson is engaged to me. (*Takes c.*)

DOR. Billy! Is this true?

(Comes down to BILLY'S right.)

MRS. C. He proposed to me this very evening and I accepted him.

BILLY. There's some mistake.

MRS. C. There is no mistake. I've had enough experience, Mr. Billy Jackson, to know a proposal when I hear one.

GWEN. Mamma, mamma, he is engaged to me!

DOR. Billy Jackson, I never want to see you again.

MRS. C. You are welcome to him, Miss Gwendolyn; I never want to see him again. Mr. Jackson, our engagement is broken. If you want her now, you are at liberty, sir, you are at liberty.

MRS. P.-S. Mr. Jackson, there is no use asking you to explain. I have only one thing to say to you—and that is ———
(*Loud peal of door-bell off L. Music: The same as for SOL.'s first entrance.*) Lulu!

Enter LULU from R. She crosses to L. and exits.

MRS. SEMIRAMIS SPIGGOT (*outside L.*). I want to come in. I want my husband.

LULU. I'll speak to Mrs. Perrington-Shine.

Enter LULU from L.

MRS. P.-S. What is it, Lulu? Who is it?

LULU. It's a lady with some children. She says she wants her husband.

MRS. P.-S. She must have gotten into the wrong house. Her husband isn't here.

(*Music louder. Enter MRS. S. followed by EUPEPSIA SPIGGOT and five other children, walking one behind the other.*

MRS. S. takes C., the children group around her.)

MRS. S. He *is* here! Sailing under false pretenses. He *is* here, and with another wife. I'll have my rights.

MRS. P.-S. I am Mrs. Perrington-Shine. You've made a mistake. Your husband isn't here. (*At L. C.*)

MRS. S. (*pointing to SOL., who takes a step backward and as BILLY is beside him, MRS. S. is pointing to BILLY*). There he is! The false, deceitful wretch. Cutting up like a gay Lothario here at the wedding feast! Children, see your father! See his disgrace!

EUP. Oh, father, father!

MRS. S. This is no place for me. I'll return to the hotel. To-morrow I'll get a divorce. I'll see if there is any law in this land for a confiding wife, the mother of seven.

ALL. The mother of seven! Oh, Billy!

(BILLY *wilts.*)

BILLY. She's not talking to me. I never saw her before. There's some mistake.

MRS. S. Come, children. This is no place for us. My heart is breaking. (*Crosses up to door L., then turns.*) And I thought that you were a model man.

[*Exit L., with EUP. and children.*]

MRS. P.-S. Now, Mr. Jackson, will you be good enough to explain?

BILLY. It's all a mistake!

MRS. P.-S. Your wife and children a mistake! You are a villain, sir. I must ask you to leave my house.

DOR. Oh, Billy, can't you explain?

Enter AUNT P. from L.

MRS. C. I feel faint. (*Clasps her hand to breast.*) My diamonds! (*Screams.*) I've been robbed. My diamond necklace. I had it just a moment ago. I've been robbed. Billy Jackson, where is my necklace?

BRI. What do you mean to infer, Mrs. Clinger?

MRS. C. I had it just now. I've been with no one except that man. I demand that he be searched.

(*Lively music. Quick action.*)

MAL. Other things are missing too.

AUNT P. Dey sure is. Somebody stole ma supper. Somebody took ten dollars an' sixty-seben cents out ob ma labender colored hose.

MRS. C. Search him! Search him!

BILLY. I'm perfectly willing. Come on and search me, Bright.

BRI. It's absurd!

MRS. C. I insist on it.

BILLY. And so do I.

(BRI. *crosses to BILLY and searches him. BILLY takes off coat and hands it to BRI., who searches it and draws out the necklace from pocket.*)

MRS. C. I told you so, I told you so.

MRS. P.-S. Call the police!

BRI. Billy, Billy, what does this mean?

(Drops coat on stage.)

BILLY. First I'm engaged to three, I lose my money in the Fourth National Bank, I find a wife and half a dozen kids, and now I'm a thief. Don't send for the police, send for the keeper of the insane asylum. Tell him to prepare padded cell No. 23 for little Billy! *(This speech loud, fast and dramatic.)*

QUICK CURTAIN

ACT III

SCENE.—*Same set as Act II.*

*Enter BRI. at risè and crosses to telephone on wall at R.
Takes down receiver.*

BRI. (*in telephone*). Hello, Central. (*A pause.*) Hello, hello! I wonder if Central's gone to sleep. Hello! What's the matter with the girl, anyhow! Hello! Oh, yes, I wanted you, Central! Give me 6696 Main. Yes, the police station, thank you. (*DUN appears in front of fireplace and listens.*) Hello, is this the police station? Oh, yes—thank you. I want to speak to the sergeant. All right. (*Pause.*) Hello, Sergeant, is that you? This is Early. Yes, I know that it's early in the morning, but this is Mr. Early speaking to you. I was there this afternoon, you remember. Yes, about that detective. We need one up here right away. Our wedding presents have been stolen. (*Pause.*) Oh, he came up an hour ago. Well, if he did, he failed to make connections—for he hasn't arrived yet. (*Pause.*) Oh, all right. Send a couple of men if you can. It's most important. Yes, we've missed other things, and we think that the thief is hiding in the house or the grounds. (*Pause.*) All right. Much obliged. Good-bye.

(*DUN disappears.*)

Enter BILLY from R. U. E.

BILLY. Did you ever see anything like this, Bright?

(*Sinks in chair at R.*)

BRI. You're up against it, Bill. I know you didn't take those things; I'll vouch for that. But what on earth made you propose to three girls all at once?

BILLY. I didn't. I proposed separately.

BRI. And they all accepted you. Poor old Bill!

(*Hand on his shoulder.*)

BILLY. Mrs. Perrington-Shine thinks that I'm the burglar, as well as the heart-breaker. She's ordered me to leave the house at once. (*Crosses to L.*)

BRI. Where are you going?

BILLY. Going to pack up, and catch the twelve-ten train back to the city.

BRI. I'll go up with you. I've just telephoned to the police.

BILLY. What did they say?

BRI. The sergeant said he sent a man up here an hour ago.

BILLY. Maybe he's the one who stole the things.

BRI. Oh, no, that's impossible; he's a policeman.

BILLY. I have heard of policemen who stole. Well, I've got to pack, if I want to get that train.

BRI. I can't tell you how sorry I am, old man.

BILLY. Oh, it's all right. I'm sure Doris doesn't think that I'm a burglar. Coming?

BRI. Sure thing.

[*Exeunt, L.*]

Enter DUN from fireplace.

DUN (*singing*). "They're after me, they're after me, to capture me is every one's desire!" I got to get away. Got all the goods packed in this little suit-case. (*Sees BILLY's coat on floor.*) Hello, what's this? (*Searches it.*) Not a cent. (*Sees scarab pin.*) Nothing but a dinky little stick-pin. Well, I can use that in my business. (*Pins scarab on coat.*) Now, to vamoose. (*Sees BRI's coat, cap, etc., up c.*) I might just as well disguise myself as a gentleman. (*Puts on auto coat and cap.*) I wonder if my touring car is waiting at the gate! (*Puts on gloves and goggles.*) Now, I'm the little chauffeur, all right, all right. (*Picks up grip.*)

Enter BRI. from L.; quickly comes down c., and meets DUN.

BRI. Well, my man, what do you want?

DUN Excuse me, sir, is this where the wedding party is?

BRI. This is Mrs. Perrington-Shine's. What can I do for you?

DUN (*coolly*). Nothing.

BRI. Well, what are you doing here?

DUN (*mysteriously, putting finger to lips*). Sh!

BRI. Oh, you're from headquarters?

DUN. Yes. A long way from headquarters. Don't you know me?

BRI. Yes, I do now.

DUN (*to audience*). Well, wouldn't that make you freeze in summer? He says he knows me!

BRI. Have you been here long?

DUN. Not very.

BRI. The police sergeant told me you were coming.

DUN. He did! (*To audience.*) I wonder how he knew it.

BRI. I thought at first you were the burglar.

DUN. You did?

BRI. Yes. Funny, wasn't it?

DUN. Yes, awfully. Do I look like a burglar?

BRI. Well, you do—a little.

DUN. That's because I'm in disguise.

BRI. I thought that couldn't be your natural face.

DUN. Where is our man?

BRI. That's what I sent for you for. To find him. It seems funny that I took a policeman for a burglar.

DUN. Oh, since the New York exposures, they're almost one and the same thing.

BRI. We've lost three diamond necklaces, several pocket-books, a set of solid silver and cut-glass and all our wedding presents.

DUN. He didn't miss much, did he?

BRI. We have been guarding the front and back door. He's in the house and can't escape any other way.

DUN. Where could he hide?

BRI. Probably in the attic or in the kitchen or wash-room.

DUN. Are you sure he's in the house?

BRI. As sure as I am that you're here.

DUN. Well, I reckon he's here then. Shall we look up-stairs?

BRI. I'll leave everything in your hands.

DUN. Much obliged. So everything is in my hands? (*Smiles.*)

BRI. Of course, go as far as you like.

DUN. I'll do that all right, all right.

BRI. We've heard several suspicious noises in the fireplace. Mr. Meek got his gun and wanted to shoot down the chimney, but I persuaded him not to disturb the ladies.

DUN (*wringing his hand heartily*). That's right. Never shoot and disturb the ladies.

BRI. I'll tell you what I'll do, I'll make a thorough search up-stairs and you guard that front door. There is a valuable wallet of papers in that desk there. Keep your eye on that.

(*Crosses to L.*)

DUN. You bet I will.

BRI. If he tries to run out, shoot—and shoot hard.

[*Exit, L.*

(*DUN crosses to table and opens drawer. After a pause, while DUN is working at drawer, BILLY enters from L. unobserved, sees DUN and hides behind screen.*)

DUN (*searching drawer*). I know it's here somewhere. I saw him when he put it in here. I've got it. No, it's only a pack of cards.

Enter DODO, R. U. E. She sees DUN, starts, then stands watching him.

DODO. The burglar! What are you doing at that drawer?

DUN. Nothin', lady. So help me. I wasn't doin' nothin'.

(*Turns.*)

DODO (*recognizing him*). Great heavens, it's Dun!

DUN. Dodo, the Dazzling Daisy. Well, I'll be blowed!

DODO. Still at your old tricks, eh? I thought that you were earning an honest living in Canada.

DUN. What are you doing here?

DODO. That's nothing to you.

DUN. Oh, ain't it? It's a pity if I can't ask my own wife what she is doing.

DODO (*quickly*). That's enough of that. I'm here as a guest at Mr. Early's wedding.

DUN. Oh, no, you hain't. You're up to some little game, my lady. I haven't been your beloved husband for eight years not to know all your little schemes. You're no more of an invited guest here than I am.

DODO. Well, it's no concern of yours, anyway.

DUN. Oh, and hain't it? You're up to your old tricks, me Dazzling Daisy, and I want my share.

DODO. Your share? You're crazy. You have no claim on me.

DUN. Do you want me to call the whole blamed party in and to tell them that you are my wife?

DODO. For goodness' sakes, no! Are you going to molest me always?

DUN. There's something crooked going on here and I'm going to lay low until I find out what it is. Anyhow, you're the main crook, I know that much!

DODO. You'd better be careful how you address me. What's to prevent my calling in the party and telling them that I caught you rifling that drawer?

DUN. Do it! Do it! They'd laugh at you for your pains. I'm paid for examining that drawer. I'm no burglar; I'm a private detective. It's my business to find the burglar. Maybe I'm talking to her now.

DODO. You are no detective. You found yourself in hot water and are trying to pass for an officer. I know your tricks of old.

DUN. What of it? I know about you, too. You're palming yourself off as the old professor guy's wife. I heard 'em call you Mrs. Spiggot. You hain't no more Mrs. Spiggot than I am. You're Mrs. Dun, and will be as long as I choose to contest the divorce.

DODO. Of course I'm not Mrs. Spiggot.

DUN. If you are I can have you up for bigamy.

DODO. Dun, why can't we work together?

DUN. I'm afraid of your tricks. I wouldn't trust you out of my sight. I know you, Daisy. I guess I ought to. We've been married long enough. Come now, what's your little game?

DODO. That's nothing to you. I know that you've made a big haul in this house. Those Tiffany necklaces are worth thousands, and you've swept everything else into your little bag. Now you go, and let me alone. I won't say a word.

DUN. That's no way to talk to your faithful little husband. You're up to something—and I want my share.

DODO. Why do you hound me this way? Why can't you let me alone? Why did I ever meet you?

DUN. You'd better ask yourself why you ran away and left me. I might be a crook, my lady, but I've always played fair. (*Comes close to her and grasps her wrist.*) Have you?

DODO (*turning away from him*). Let me go. How dare you!

DUN. You ran away and went on the stage. I've kept track of you. I know all about that lawyer guy, Maurice Cohan, who's trying to get your divorce for you. I've fought it and I'm going to keep on fighting it. I've got the money, and you know it.

DODO. I was a fool not to take his advice and brand you as an habitual criminal. I guess that would give me my divorce.

DUN. Oh, no,—you wasn't a fool. If you'd do a thing like that, you'd be the fool. If you ever bring up the subject of *my* criminal record what do you think I'd tell about *yours*?

DODO. There is no use quarreling. Meet me in the garden to-morrow morning at five—and I'll tell you what I'm doing here.

DUN. No tricks, my lady?

DODO. No tricks. Hush, some one is coming. We mustn't be seen together. (*Crosses to R. U. E.*) To-morrow in the garden at five. [*Exit, R. U. E.*]

DUN. I'll be there. To think of my meeting little Dodo here! Well, we're both of us butting into high society. I've made a clean sweep and have got all the swag in a dress-suit case. I'll just slip away now, and then come back to see little wife in the morning. (*Starts to exit L.*)

BILLY (*coming from behind the screen*). Just a moment, Mr. Dun.

DUN (*rushing toward BILLY, dropping suit-case*). Let me at you.

BILLY (*thrusting revolver in his face*). It's loaded, my man.

DUN (*slowly lowering arms*). What do you want?

(*Husky voice.*)

BILLY (*calmly*). Sit down.

(*DUN starts toward him, BILLY pushes revolver at him.*)

DUN *seats himself slowly* L. C.)

DUN. What do you want? (*At L. C.*)

BILLY. I'll let you know in a minute. First, I want those diamond necklaces and all the other plunder you've taken from this house. (*At L.*)

DUN. I ain't got 'em. I ain't got a thing.

BILLY. Oh, yes, you have. You just said you had all the swag in your dress-suit case. Too bad to wrinkle your dress-suit that way. I'll just take that suit-case.

Enter AUNT P., R. U. E. She sees DUN after she gets well on stage. She screams loudly.

AUNT P. Ah! My lawsy massy, great Day ob de Trumpet! Help, murder, fire, police!

Enter BRI. from R. I E.

BRI. What's the matter? (*At R. C.*)

BILLY. I've caught the burglar.

BRI. That isn't the burglar. That's the detective.

DUN. Yes, sir. That's what I told him. I said —

BILLY. That will do for you. Just look in that dress-suit case, Paradise.

DUN (*starting to rise*). I'll show you!

BILLY (*thrusting gun at him*). Sit down, Dun; you're done.

AUNT P. (*opening suit-case*). Great day in de mawnin'! Here's de di'mond necklaces—and here's de candelabrum—an' Miss Doris' lace—an' de weddin' presents. An' glory be! here's my ten dollars an' sixty-seben cents. Dat's de burglum! Dat's him sure as you're born!

BILLY. Call an officer, Brighton.

BRI. There's one outside. Did you search him?

BILLY. We'll let the officer do that.

BRI. (*coming close to DUN*). Hello, he's wearing my scarab pin.

BILLY. That's the one he got from me.

DUN. Take it if you want it.

BRI. No, thank you. Scarabs never did agree with my complexion. You take it, Billy.

BILLY. I never *did* like scarabs. I've heard that they're unlucky. You may have it, Paradise.

AUNT P. No, sir! I don' want no artificial bugs 'round me.

Enter SOL. from L.

SOL. Ah, I thought I heard a cry for help!

BRI. We've caught the burglar.

SOL. And have you recovered the missing property?

BRI. Yes, everything. [*Exit AUNT P., R. U. E.*]

SOL. But how did Mrs. Clinger's diamond necklace get into this young man's pocket?

BRI. Our friend here evidently slipped it in when Billy was trying to decide which girl he wanted.

SOL. (*seeing scarab in DUN's coat*). He has my scarab.

DUN. You can have it. I don't want it.

SOL. Very well. (*Takes it and pins it on his coat.*)

BILLY. It's liable to bring you bad luck, Professor.

SOL. I know it. I shall bury it immediately. The bad luck only lasts for twenty-four hours, and after that time the owner of the pin enjoys the most bountiful generosity of the Egyptian gods.

DUN. I feel better since you took that thing away from me.

Enter LULU from L. Music same as for SOL.'s entrance in Act I. Soft.

LULU. Excuse me for buttin' in, but that lady with all them children is here again. She insists on seeing Professor Spiggot.

BRI. Tell her that he's gone back to Egypt.

SOL. Do nothing of the sort. It's my wife, Semiramis. Cousin Brighton, we've had enough deception. I'll explain to my wife the true status of affairs. (*Crosses up L.*)

BRI. (*going to SOL.*). Oh, see here. Don't do that.

BILLY (*joining BRI.*). Don't give the whole thing away.

SOL. Lulu, show the lady in.

(*DUN crosses to R. silently.*)

BILLY. Please don't, Lulu.

BRI. Wait a moment. We've found the thief and the missing jewels. Help me a while longer, please, Cousin Solomon. [*Exit DUN, at R. I E.*]

LULU. Ah! (*Screams.*) The man! The burglar! He's gone!

ALL (*rushing to R. I E. and looking down*). Head him off! Stop him! Police!

(*LULU, BILLY and BRI. rush out R. I E. SOL. starts to follow them.*)

Enter MRS. S. from L.

MRS. S. Solomon!

SOL. Yes, my love!

(*End music.*)

MRS. S. You were trying to run away from me.

SOL. Oh, no. There has been a horrible robbery here. The thief just escaped out of that door on to the balcony. My cousin pursued him. And I was just about to follow his example.

MRS. S. Follow the thief's example and escape?

SOL. No, follow my cousin.

MRS. S. I couldn't stay away any longer. Oh, Solomon, Solomon, you have broken my heart!

SOL. I never meant to do so, I'm sure. The fault was quite unintentional, I assure you.

MRS. S. But in spite of all, I'll not leave you here; I'll not desert you. For the sake of little Cheops and little Ptolemy, Rameses and Isis, to say nothing of Eupepsia and Hemachus. For their innocent little sakes—I have come to you for an explanation.

SOL. My dear, there has been a terrible mistake.

MRS. S. Oh, Solomon, Solomon, how could you?

SOL. That's what I ask myself. How could I?

MRS. S. Then you do not attempt to deny it? It's true! You have another wife?

SOL. That's a mistake. I do deny it, most emphatically. You are the only wife I have at present, Semiramis.

MRS. S. I received a telegram, a most horrible telegram, from little Hemachus. Oh, Solomon, Solomon! (*Half crying.*)

SOL. What did little Hemachus say?

MRS. S. He said that you had another wife here. Now what have you to say? What explanation can you give?

SOL. I never was clever at explanations.

MRS. S. I want the truth; do you hear, the truth!

Enter HEM. from L.

HEM. Father!

MRS. S. Hemachus! Little Hemachus! Now we shall have some light on the subject.

SOL. (*aside*). Why didn't I allow Lulu to tell her that I had gone to Egypt?

HEM. Mother—you received my telegram?

MRS. S. Yes, and I came at once. Oh, what did it mean? Where is his other wife?

HEM. Mother—I made a mistake—there isn't any other wife.

SOL. That's what I've been trying to say all along.

HEM. I sent that telegram under a misapprehension. There is a poor lady here, a guest at the wedding, who is non compos mentis.

MRS. S. (*suspiciously*). Who told you that?

HEM. Oh, every one knows it. She imagines that she is

everybody's wife. It is a peculiar hallucination. Cousin Brighton tried to humor the poor thing, and I sent you that telegram before I realized the true state of affairs.

MRS. S. Are you sure that you realize the true state of affairs now?

SOL. Of course he does. Cousin Brighton will corroborate the story.

Enter BILLY and BRI. from R. I E.

BILLY. He got away.

BRI. Well, we have all the stolen goods. Let him go.

SOL. Cousin Brighton, this is Semiramis, my wife.

BRI. So glad to meet you, Cousin Semiramis. (*Crosses to L.*) So glad to welcome you to the wedding party. Let me present Mr. Jackson.

BILLY. Pleased, I'm sure. (*Down R. C.*)

BRI. Cousin Solomon said that you were detained at home with little Cheops. (*Down L. C.*)

MRS. S. I *was* detained at home. But I received a telegram from —

BRI. From little Hemachus. He misunderstood the ravings of the poor lady up-stairs. She imagines that she is everybody's wife. Why, she even thought that she was engaged to marry Mr. Jackson here!

BILLY (*sadly*). Yes. It is very unfortunate.

MRS. S. It is—*very* unfortunate.

HEM. Probably to-morrow she will imagine that she is *my* wife. (*Up R. C.*)

MRS. S. I'm so bewildered that I hardly know what to do.

BRI. Go up-stairs and rest. It's late anyhow, and you've had a tiresome journey.

HEM. Where are the other children, mother?

MRS. S. They are waiting in the hall. (*Crosses to L.*) Come in, children. We are reconciled. We shall stay here to-night.

Enter EUP. followed by four other children.

SOL. Euepepsia, my love. (*Kisses her.*) And Osiris! (*Kiss.*) Isis! (*Kiss.*) Ptolemy! (*Kiss.*) And little Ramesses! (*Kiss.*)

BRI. (*ringing hand-bell*). Quite a little family reunion.

MRS. S. Solomon, can you ever forgive me for doubting you?

SOL. Of course I can. The doubt was natural.

Enter LULU from R.

BRI. Lulu, take this lady and the children up to Mr. Spiggot's room.

LULU. Up to *his* room, Mr. Early? (*Points to SOL.*)

BRI. Of course.

LULU. Well, what do you know about that? My, but he's the gay old bird. (*Crosses to door L.*)

MRS. S. Good-night, gentlemen. Solomon, have you forgiven me?

SOL. Entirely, my angel. (*At c.*)

MRS. S. Come, children. (*Crosses to door L.*) And to think that I ever doubted you!

[*Exit L. with HEM., EUP., and children.*]

BILLY (*shaking SOL.'s right hand*). You see how easy it was.

BRI. (*shaking SOL.'s left hand*). Just as easy! I wish I could get rid of my troubles as easy as you have yours.

BILLY. And look at *me*. None of the girls speak to me now.

Enter AUNT P. with telegram.

AUNT P. Here's one ob dese telegraph things for Mr. Jackson.

BILLY. More bad news. (*Opens telegram.*) Hurray! Congratulate me! Paradise, you're a dream of heaven! Here's five dollars. (*Searches pockets.*) Bright, lend me five dollars. (*Takes bill and gives it to AUNT P., who grins.*) Listen to this. "The failure of the Fourth National does not affect us. All our deposits withdrawn a week ago." It's from father. (*Shakes hands with men.*) I'm not a pauper. I breathe again. (*Rushes around and hugs AUNT P.*) I'm the happiest man in the country. (*Rushes to L.*) Let me go. I want to tell Doris the good news. Hurray! Oh, Doris, Doris!

[*Exit, L.*]

AUNT P. He gimme five dollars. Dat man hain't so ram-bunctious as I thought he was. Did you ketch the burglum, Mr. Early?

BRI. No, but we've recovered all the stolen property.

(*Down R.*)

AUNT P. Glory be! Stolen property all recovered. I'm so happy dat I feel like dancin' de grizzly bear.

BRI. Got your money back, did you?

AUNT P. Yes, sir. Say, boss, ebery cent ob ma ten dollars an' sixty-seben was right dere in dat labender-colored hose. (*Crosses to L.*) Mis' Shine done say for me to put out de lights an' go to bed.

BRI. We'll put out the lights, Paradise.

AUNT P. All right, sir. I certainly am glad dat I recobered dat labender-colored hose. [*Exit, L.*]

SOL. Now, Cousin Brighton, you must get that horrible woman out of the house at once. Suppose Semiramis meets her. (*At c.*)

(*Loud scream heard out L. Then enter MRS. S., very much excited, with a woman's hat and shoulder-cape which she is tearing to pieces.*)

MRS. S. Don't speak to me! Take him away! Take him out of my sight! Oh, you villain; you Mormon! You, you, you! (*At c.*)

SOL. Whatever is the matter? (*At c.*)

MRS. S. Matter! Oh, you villain; you man with two wives. That maid showed me to your room—and what do I find? I find this—and—this! In your room.

BRI. (*aside*). I told Lulu to remove those things.

MRS. S. I'll take the children and go at once.

BRI. Wait a moment. Listen to reason. (*Down R.*)

MRS. S. Their father is a gay deceiver—a Mormon—a roué!

SOL. But, Semiramis—

MRS. S. Don't speak to me. How dare you stay in the same room with me!

BRI. Did you say you found those things in your husband's room?

MRS. S. (*tearing them into bits*). Yes, I did. You can't deceive me again. I'll leave this house. I'll go home to mother. I'll get a divorce.

BRI. The explanation is ridiculously simple.

MRS. S. (*calming down*). Explanation? There can be no explanation. (*Very loud*). I won't listen to you. I won't. (*Crosses to door L.*) Children, my poor fatherless darlings, come here. (*Enter HEM., EUP., and the children.*) This house is no place for us. We've been deceived.

Enter LULU from R. U. E.

BRI. (*at R. C.*). Mrs. Spiggot, please listen to reason. Cousin Solomon is incapable of deception.

MRS. S. That's what I always thought. But *is* he?

(*At L.*)

SOL. (*at c.*). My dear, I am sure Cousin Brighton can explain.

BRI. Of course I can. Do you see that pin that your husband has on his coat?

MRS. S. Yes; it's Kaa, the sacred scarab.

SOL. Am I wearing that pin? (*Takes it off.*) No wonder you won't believe me. (*Takes pin to jardinière up c.*) Thus do I restore thee for twenty-four hours to thy native element.

(*Buries pin.*)

BRI. Now, Cousin Semiramis, when Lulu took you upstairs just now she put you into the wrong room.

MRS. S. Lulu, come here. (*LULU crosses to R. C.; BRI. follows her.*) When you took me up-stairs just now did you take me to Professor Spiggot's room?

LULU (*holding her hand back of her for tip from BRI.*). Let me think. So many guests are here. (*BRI. puts bill in LULU's hand.*) Why, of course I didn't. I made an awful mistake. I showed you into the wrong room. *That* room belongs to the other lady.

MRS. S. Is this true?

LULU. Yes, mam. Of course it is. Mistakes will happen, you know. (*Crosses to MRS. S.*) Professor Spiggot's room is right across the hall.

(*SOL. and BRI. shake hands unobserved.*)

MRS. S. Can it be that I have made a mistake? (*At L. C.*)

LULU. No, mam; it was all my fault. (*At L.*)

BRI. Take her up again, Lulu. And be sure to show her the right room this time.

MRS. S. (*coming to SOL.*). Oh, Solomon, Solomon, can you ever forgive me?

(*SOL. turns away.*)

LULU (*coming to BRI., and speaking aside*). Which room shall I put her in?

BRI. In Hemachus' room. (*Down R.*)

LULU. All right, I'm on. Oh, you men, you men!

(*Crosses to L.*)

MRS. S. For little Cheops' sake! For the sake of little Osiris and Isis and Ptolemy and Hemachus and Eupepsia, for the sake of little Rameses—forgive me. (*At c.*)

EUP. Father!

HEM. Father!

SOL. And you'll never suspect me again?

MRS. S. Never!

SOL. And you'll never doubt my word?

MRS. S. Never!

SOL. Then I'll forgive you.

(*Embraces her and children in a bunch.*)

LULU. Now, lady, I'll show you to the *right* room. It's across the hall from the other one.

MRS. S. Come, children! Oh, Solomon, you see me in the dust, figuratively speaking, in the dust at your feet.

(*Crosses L.*)

SOL. Oh, any one is apt to make a mistake.

MRS. S. And to think I mistrusted you! Solomon, you are a king among men.

[*Exit L., followed by children and LULU.*]

SOL. I believe it was all the fault of the scarab.

BRI. I seem to be having just as bad luck without it, as I had when I wore it.

SOL. You found the missing property, and your money is safe.

BRI. Yes, but I haven't got rid of Dodo.

SOL. Well, do so at once. Semiramis must have no further cause for suspicion.

BRI. You're right. I'll write Dodo a check for thirty thousand dollars, get my letters from her, and tell her to go. I hate to lose the money—but I wouldn't have Amy learn the truth for twice the sum. (*Sits at desk and writes check.*)

Enter DODO from R. U. E.

DODO. Hello, boys. How's hubby?

SOL. Don't call me hubby. What would Semiramis say?

DODO. I'm getting tired of all this comedy, Bright. Give me the money, take the letters, let me say, Luck to you! and be on my way.

BRI. I'm writing your check now.

DODO. Thirty thousand dollars—remember!

BRI. It's a pile of money for a few letters.

DODO. Yes, but these are such warm letters.

BRI. Where are they?

DODO. Right here. I never let them get away from me.

BRI. Well, here's your check.

(Starts to tear it from book.)

Enter BILLY from L., with overcoat, hat and grip.

BILLY. What are you doing, Bright?

BRI. Paying thirty thousand dollars to get rid of the Dazzling Daisy.

BILLY. Oh, but that's not necessary now.

DODO. What do you mean?

BILLY. You don't have to pay her a cent.

BRI. *(starting up)*. I don't?

BILLY. Not a red.

DODO. And since when did you get wise to our private affairs, Mr. Cupid Jackson?

BILLY. About half an hour ago.

DODO. You mean?

BILLY. You know what I mean. Half an hour ago I was behind that screen and heard all of your little conversation with the late Mr. Dun.

DODO. Dun?

BILLY. Yes, you're done. And so is he. We've caught him, and he's made a full confession.

DODO. I'll sue you for a breach of promise, Mr. Brighton Early.

BILLY. You'll do nothing of the kind. When Brighton was carrying on his innocent little flirtation with you, you were a married woman.

BRI. Married!

BILLY. That's the word. This little dazzling daisy is the burglar's wife, and has been for the last eight years.

DODO. It isn't true.

BILLY. Oh, yes, it is. We've caught your husband. Do you want him to confront you?

DODO. Heavens, no!

BILLY. Then the best thing for you to do is to catch the twelve-ten train back to the city. We might sue you for black-mail.

DODO. It was only a joke. (*Crosses to L.*) I'll go at once.

BILLY. Wait and get your things.

DODO. Let me go. (*Throws letters on floor.*) There are your letters. You can't hold me now.

BRI. We don't want to. You just have time to catch the train. Good-night, and a pleasant trip.

DODO. You'll not file a complaint?

BRI. Of course not.

DODO. Thank you. Good-bye, good-bye, forever.

[*Exit, L.*

BILLY. Professor, there goes the Dazzler.

SOL. Thank heavens! Now I'll see Semiramis and explain the whole thing to her.

BILLY. You'd better not. Let sleeping dogs lie.

SOL. Probably that would be best. (*Crosses to L.*) What an exciting evening this has been. If my Semiramis knew the truth, I wonder what she would say. (*Yawns.*) My, but this has been an eventful day. (*Crosses to L.*) I think that I'll go up-stairs.

BRI. I think it would be the wiser plan to say nothing to your wife about Dodo.

SOL. I suppose you are right.

BRI. If she ever suspected that you gave us your permission to call the Dazzling Daisy your wife —

BILLY. What would Semiramis say?

SOL. Good-night, young men.

[*Exit, L.*

BRI. Good-night, Cousin Solomon.

BILLY. You've come out of all your troubles like a Phoenix. I wish I were as lucky.

BRI. Maybe I can straighten things out for you. I've been doing so much straightening out to-day that I feel like a professional.

BILLY. Nothing doing for me, I guess. Mrs. Perrington-Shine has put me out. I have my things all packed up and am ready to catch the twelve-ten.

BRI. I'm awfully sorry, old man. My wedding won't seem like a wedding at all, unless you are here to support my fainting form.

BILLY. Sorry, but it can't be helped.

BRI. Poor little Doris! Do you know, Billy, I think that she really cares for you.

BILLY. No, she don't. Nobody cares for me now. Maybe some day she'll learn that I wasn't entirely to blame.

BRI. Why don't you see her before you go?

BILLY. I tried to, but she wouldn't let me.

Enter DOR. from L., with traveling coat, hat and suit-case. She stays at back unobserved.

BRI. And, Billy, I think you really care about her.

BILLY. I know I do. If I can't win little Doris I never want to speak to another girl as long as I live. Why, Bright, when she heard that I was in trouble and had lost my money, she stood right up and said that she didn't care for the money. She said that she would marry me at once, and that we could save together.

BRI. Then why on earth did you propose to Mrs. Clinger?

BILLY. I don't know. The impulse of the moment, I guess. And I was wearing that scarab pin; maybe that accounts for it.

BRI. Didn't you fall in love with her, too?

BILLY. With Mrs. Clinger? Never. I never saw a girl that I'd give a second thought to, except Doris.

DOR. Billy!

BILLY. Doris! You've heard?

(Blue moonlight through window on BILLY and DOR.)

DOR. Everything.

BILLY. And you believe me? You'll give me another chance?

DOR. The same old chance is open. I have always believed in you, Billy.

BILLY. But Mrs. Perrington-Shine has ordered me to leave the house.

DOR. I'm leaving, too.

BILLY. And you don't think that I'm the burglar?

DOR. I knew all the time you weren't. The only thing that you steal is hearts.

BILLY. I wonder if I've stolen yours?

DOR. It's always been yours.

BILLY. Doris, you're a darling!

(Soft waltz music till tag.)

BRI. (*coughing*). Children, please remember that I am present.

BILLY. I'll tell you what we can do. We'll elope. At once. Catch the twelve-ten, and get to the city in half an hour. I'll take you to my mother's, and in the morning—wedding bells for two!

DOR. Would it be right?

BRI. Of course it would. Delays are dangerous. You've got only five minutes to catch the train.

DOR. I'm ready.

BILLY. And so am I. Bright, you're all right.

BRI. I said that I would straighten things out.

BILLY (*shaking his hand warmly*). Come over to-morrow morning to our wedding and be my best man.

BRI. I'll do it.

Enter AMY from R.

AMY. Bright!

BRI. Billy and Doris are eloping.

AMY. For goodness' sakes! Isn't it rather sudden?

BILLY. Not at all. I've been in love with her ever since this afternoon.

BRI. You've just time to catch the train.

AMY. Doris, you dear! (*Kisses her.*)

BILLY. Amy, you and Bright be at the house by ten to-morrow. We want you to help us through.

AMY. We'll be there. Give my love to your mother.

DOR. }
BILLY. } Good-bye!

(They hurry out L.)

AMY. }
BRI. } Good-bye.

BRI. If this hasn't been an eventful day I've never seen one.

AMY. To-morrow will be another. In the morning we'll go to Doris' wedding.

(Red firelight on AMY and BRI.)

BRI. And in the evening we'll have one of our own.

AMY. Good-night, then—until to-morrow.

BRI. Good-night, beloved!

(They kiss as the curtain slowly descends.)

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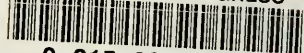
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